THE

HISTORY OF SARNATH

OR THE

CRADLE OF BUDDHISM

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE MUHAMMEDAN CONQUEST, INCLUDING AN ARCHÆOLOGICAL GUIDE TO THE MONUMENTS AND THE MUSEUM.

BY

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DEDICATED

TO

Sir Binode C. Mitter Kt.,
Bar-at-law,

AS A MARK OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE,

By the Author.

PREFACE.

It has grown into a prevailing fashion now to get the Introduction of a book written by some distinguished personality. Instead of encroaching, however, upon the valuable *time* of a great man, I have, on the other-hand, designedly chosen some reviews from some important journals to serve as the little Introduction to this book in as much as I find by this the object will have been equally well attained.

Unexpectedly encouraged by the appreciative tone of the press reviews as well as by the kind invitations, I received from time to time to accompany and guide some very distinguished visitors to Sarnath, among whom were personalities like the Late Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, the great educationist Sir Micheal Sadler, Her Excellency Lady Rawlinson, Her Highness Maharani Gaekwar of Baroda, His Excellency Sir William Marris, I venture to publish in the following pages an English History of Sarnath. This is as well meant to meet the long-felt demand for an English Edition, specially from those, who can neither read Hindi nor Bengali. The work chiefly aims at giving, as in its original, a book between

an ordinary "Guide" meant specially for tourists and a Catalogue describing *seriatim* the archæological exhibits of the site : it has been presented in a connected history form. Should any one find it anyway useful either for history or for a tour round Sarnath, I shall consider my labours fully requited.

Lastly, I beg the indulgence of my Oriental readers to look with a generous eye on the unavoidable limitation of transliteration and accuracy of printing as may be noticed in the book. It must have been well-known to them, I venture to assume, that with the half-educated majority of compositors in an Indian Press, attainment of perfection in these respects is always an impossibility.

49 Durgakund, Benares
The 25th Dec., 1924. } B. C. BHATTACHARYA.

INTRODUCTION.

"The author of this work has undertaken the task of narrating in High Hindi the history of the famous Buddhist sanctuary of Sarnath—the Isipatana-Migadāya of the Pali scriptures—from the earliest recorded times down to the present day, and he has accomplished it, on the whole, very well. Beginning with the Pali sources, he proceeds to trace the fortunes of Sarnath through the centuries as indicated by the monuments and inscriptions found there, which attest the rule of Asoka, the Suṅgas, Śakas, Guptas, and later monarchs. He then gives a sketch of the excavations made at Sarnath, which, beginning from the casual vandalism of Jagat Singh nearly 130 years ago, have gradually brought to light the ancient glories of the place ; and this is followed by an account of its monuments and inscriptions and of its present condition."

(*Review of the Hindi Edition—The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London*).

"To those who wish to visit Sarnath near Benares this will be a very instructive handbook and guide. The book will furnish valuable information to those who

have a taste in archæology. It has been written on original lines and this makes the work interesting. The compilation must have cost considerable pains to the author and owing to his acquaintance with best sources of information on the subject, he has made the work sufficiently informative. The get-up is fair and the book can be had in bound cover too with a little additional cost. It is well worth being secured. The book is a translation from the Bengali and the author, who is a Professor in the Benares Hindu University, wrote it originally in that language. We have no hesitation in saying that it will be of great help both to the ordinary traveller and the students. Buddhistic culture is receiving special attention in these days and a treatise on Sarnath where a Buddhist Vihar has been opened must be valuable."

(Review of the Hindi Edition, The Modern Review)

The author of this admirably arranged and well-informed history of Sarnath.........The more reason why we should congratulate Mr. Bhattacharyya on the excellent use to which he has put the example and the guidance of the professors under whom he has worked. His book is not only a thorough and conscientious but a

delightful guide to the antiquities, the archæology, and so much as survives of the history of that famous and ancient Deerpark of Sarnath, where the great Buddhist Saṅgha or Order came into being. He has not only given a full and intelligent account of the place and its existing remains, but has supplied ample references to his authorities and an adequate index. The Bengali visitor to Benares and Sarnath is fortunate to have so competent a guide.

But Mr. Bhattacharya is more than a learned and conscientious *cicerone.* He is also, if a *foreigner* may venture to judge of such a matter, an author who has a pleasant and a dexterous style. There can be no better test of literary skill than a satisfactory and tactful translation. In discussing the stymology of the old name of Sarnath, i. e. *Mṛgadāya Ṛṣipatana*, he puts into Bengali a tale from the Jātakas, rendered with just the needful touch of archaism fitted to communicate to the modern reader a sense of the antiquity and the old-world charm of what he is reading. Told thus, the native simplicity of the old story is singularly attractive. Mr. Bhattacharyya is to be congratulated on a piece of work exhibiting not only learning and labour,

but literary skill and a real gift of exposition such as will, it may be hoped, win him many readers in Bengal, a land where Buddhist influence survives into Vaiṣṇava piety perhaps more unmistakably than in the Holy Land of Buddhism itself.

(*Review of the Bengali Edition—The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (*London*), *October* 1920).

T. P. Works, Benares.

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The Preaching Buddha (*Dharmacakkra Mudrā*).

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CHAPTER I.

Sarnath in Ancient Buddhist Literature

Sārnāth is a place sacred to the Buddhists. Here the Buddha preached for the first time his religion which has now spread over half the surface of the globe. This is why it came in time to be regarded as one of the four great holy places of the Buddhists.[1] There was a time when hundreds of Bhikshus and Bhikshunis assembled together at Sārnāth or '*Isipatana-migadāya*' and hundreds of pious Buddhists, engaged in the practice of '*Saddharma*', advanced towards the path of '*Nirvāṇa*'. At one time, pilgrims from the frontiers of India as well as from China, Japan, Java and Burma flocked to this place in order to acquire religious merit. The atmosphere of peace created in this holy place by the Arhats, Śramaṇas, Bhikshus, Sthaviras and other Buddhist devotees and the godly conduct by which they moved the heart of every one form a brilliant chapter in the religious history of the world. Even at this distant date

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1. The three other holy places are Kapilāvastu, Buddhagayā and Kusinagara.

we are in an ecstasy of joy when we think of their unostentatious renunciation. Here, in the self-same plot of land, which has now been turned into a heap of ruins through the destructive influence of time, the Buddhist Yogis sat in peaceful meditation for the attainment of spiritual bliss. Again, it was at this place that the stone-pillar of Asoka was erected and his royal behest promulgated. As a result of the religious zeal of Asoka, Sārnāth became a place highly sacred to the Buddhist. After the time of Asoka, the King Kaniska did much to improve the condition of the Vihāra at Sārnāth. Though the Gupta Kings did not do anything directly tending to the improvement of this place yet there is not the slightest doubt that some of the architectural improvements of the place were effected during their time. The architectural style of the Gupta Period met with in the ruins of Sārnāth bears testimony to the reality of this fact. This place also bears traces of the fall of Buddhism after the time of King Harsha. When Brāhmanism rose anew, the Pāla Kings tried their utmost to keep Buddhism alive. The erection of 'Śailagandha-kuṭi' at Sārnāth is one of their endeavours to preserve this religion. The fall of the Vihāra at Sārnāth synchronises with the stamping out of Buddhism from India imme-

diately after the advent of the Mahomedans in the twelfth century of the Christian Era. The history of the place, which was the centre of learning, devotion and religion for seventeen centuries, should, on no account, be neglected. The history of Sārnāth also forms an important chapter in the annals of Buddhism. An attempt has been made here to give an account of this place.

The ancient history of Sārnāth had been known to the scholars long before the excavation work of the place was taken up by the Archæological Department. The historical information of the place met with in Pāli literature could be known even earlier. But it is not known, however, whether any attempt had ever been made to collect historical facts from that source and to arrange them systematically. In Pāli literature, the place is called '*Isipatana-migadāya*'. How this name and the name of Sārnāth originated and how they came to be so widely known will be dealt with in the proper place. The references to '*Isipatana-migadāya*' in Pali literature and the historical materials available therefrom are mostly legendary. These legendary accounts could not long be taken as regular history. But now there remains no doubt that the work of excavation carried on at Sārnāth has to some extent confirmed these legendary

tales. As an example of this, it may be mentioned that the reference to a schism in Dharmakīrti's '*Saddharma Saṃgraha*' has been corroborated by the inscription on the pillar of King Asoka, lately discovered at Sārnāth. This will be described in detail in connexion with the treatment of Asokan Inscriptions. In these circumstances, one may easily judge of the desirability of dealing with the materials contained in Pāli literature.

The Buddha came to Sāranāth immediately after his attainment of Buddhahood and began to preach his religion. It was here that the '*Dharmachakra-pravartana-Sūtra*' fell from his holy lips. It was from his seat here that he gave religious instruction to the banker's son Yaśa and his father and had converted them into his religion. Again, it was at this place that he had described the '*Udapānadūsaka Jātaka*.' For all these things, this place has been very closely associated with the life of the Buddha.

In the eighth week of his attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha came to the foot of the Ajapāla nyagrodha (2). During his stay at this solitary place,

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(2) Mr. Hardy writes अजापाल for अजपाल through mistake. (See *A Manual of Buddhism* by Hardy, pp 183, 184).

Cf. Text *Mahāvagga*, 1.4. 2-5-2, Oldenberg's Edition p. 4.

he was thinking whether he would preach to the world the true light that had dawned upon him. He thought that man being a worldly creature given to enjoyment, it might be very difficult for him to conceive of *Kāraṇa tattva*, *Pratītyasamutpāda*, *Bāsanochchhheda* and other abstruse subjects constituting the means of attaining Nirvāna (3). If, again, he had preached his religion to them but they did not comprehend it, then also it would be an utterly useless thing. These and many other thoughts arose in his mind, and in the end, he resolved not to preach his religion. Then Brahmā Sahaṃpati (4) saw that the course the Buddha was

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(3) I have here followed the life of Buddha according to the Southern School. I have also made an attempt to show the distinction between this and other schools on this point.

In Burmese version, we find, "Now all beings are sunk very low by the influence of the give great passions." *Legend of the Burmese Buddha*, by Bigandet. p. 112. The Hindus make mention of six passions. They mention only five. This point should be noted.

(4) According to the Buddhists, "Sahampati" is "Svayambhu". But the '*Legend of Burmese Buddha*' says that "This Brahma had been, in the time of Buddha, Kathaba, a Rahan under the name of Thabaka ......". It seems that

going to adopt would prove disastrous to the world and that many men would suffer misery in consequence of it. He at once came to the Buddha with the speed of the wind and with folded palms said:—

"My Lord, be pleased to preach your religion for it will remove ignorance. Still there are many men free from worldly ties. If they do not adopt Dharma, they will fall down."

Brahmā having repeated this prayer thrice, the Buddha gave his assent (5). Thereupon, the God bowed unto Him and vanished.

After this the Buddha thought "To whom am I to preach my religion? Who is able to embrace it?" At once it occurred to him that Ālār Kālāmo and Uddaka Rāmaputta were the fittest persons to receive his religion. But the next moment he came to know that both

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according to the peculiar pronunciation of the Burmese 'Kasyapa' has become 'Kathaba' and Sarvakṛit' has become 'Thabaka'. Rahan means Arhan (t).

(5) "The "*Legend of the Burmese Buddha*" says that then the Buddha cast his wise eyes on earth and saw that some men were wholly immersed in sin some were half immersed and some were still in a promising condition.

of them were no more. Then he thought that he was indebted to the '*Pañchavargiya Bhikshus*' as he had received benefits from them during his residence in the forest. Thus, he made up his mind to preach his religion to them first of all and with that object in view proceeded towards Bārānasi.

In the eighth week of his attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha wandered in many places and at last came to *Isipatanamigadāya* in Bārānasi. On the way, he met an Ājivaka of the name of Upaka (6). The Panchavargiya Bhikshus were then living at Sāranāth. Finding the Buddha at a distance, they thus spoke to one another :—"Friends, Śraman Gautama is coming here. He is a "*Vāhullika*" (one given to excessive outward show) and a great *Bibhrānta* (one following a wrong course). We should not salute him. We should not stand up to show him respect (7). Let us place

(6) In the Burmese account, Migadāya=Migadābana; Bārānasi=Bārānathi and Panchavargiya Bhikshugana=Pancharahan.

(7) I have followed the original work as far as possible. *Mahāvagga*, 1. 6. 10 seq *Vinaya Pitakam* edited by Oldenberg Vol I cf. *Buddhist Birth Series*. The Pali Introduction, p 112.

a seat here. He may be seated on it, if he likes"(8). But the more the Buddha advanced towards them the more restless did they become; and when he stood face to face with them they could not help showing him due respect. He sat upon the seat meant for him and washed his feet. Then the Bhikshus had the audacity to address him by name. At this, the Buddha made it clear to them that he was no longer Gautama but had attained the name of Tathāgata endowed with '*Samyaka Sambodhi*'. After a good deal of alteration, the *Panchavargiya* Bhikshus realised his superhuman power and being desirous of getting religious instruction from him, fixed their mind on the path of virtue and began to obey his commands.

Thereafter, the Buddha addressed the Pañchavargīya Bhikshus and said to them, 'O Bhikshus, those who are going to take *Pravrajyā* should give up these two extreme paths. What are they? One of the paths is full of desires,—low, vulgar, ignoble, meant for the insignificant men and bitter in the end. The other wearies the soul, causes grief and is ignoble and bitter in the end, too. O Bhikshus, give up these two extreme paths and hear the superiority of the middle path. This path

(8) *Legend of the Burmese Buddha* p. 117.

opens the vision, brings wisdom and leads to *Upāsanā*, *Abhijñā*, *Sambodhi* and *Nirvāṇa* (9). This middle path is the "*Ārya-aṣṭāṅgika mārga*" *viz.* right sight, right thought, right speech, right deed, right *Ājība*, right exercise, right remembrance and right samādhi (10).

"O Bhikshus, sorrow is Āryyasatya ; birth, old age, disease, death, grief, repentance,—all these bring sorrow. Briefly, it may be said that these five Upādāna-skandhas cause sorrow. Oh, Bhikshus, all sorrows are Aryyasatya.

"The thirst that causes rebirth is attended with desire. It runs after its objects. This thirst is of three kinds, thirst for 'kāma', thirst for 'bhaba' and thirst for 'bibhaba'. Oh Bhikshus, the checking of sorrow is Aryyasatya. Restraint on thirst and renunciation bring peace of mind.

',Oh Bhikshus, the path leading to the cessation of sorrow is Aryyasatya (11). This is the Eight fold middle

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9. These are technical terms of the Buddhistic religion. It is not possible to explain them in detal within the compass of this small book.

10. Repetition does not mar the beauty of a piece of composition in all cases. Sometimes it becomes absolutely necessary.

11. The newly discovered stone umbrella of the Kushan

path consisting of right sight etc. Oh Bhikshus, the religious practices, mentioned before, open the vision and beget wisdom, *Prajñā*, vidyā and light. This sorrow is to be known as Āryyasatya. Oh Bhikshus, all sorrows are Aryyasatya etc.

"I have taken a vow that I shall not admit that one whether in Devaloka, Māraloka or Brahmaloka has got the highest wisdom, be one a Śramaṇa, a Brāhmaṇa, a god or a man until he has got right knowledge and clear insight in the above four Āryyasatyas and the satyas three times their number. But I have got wisdom and insight. This is my last birth." He having said this, the Pancha-vargīya Bhikshus congratulated him.

As soon as Kauṇḍinya received this teaching, he was freed from passions and impurity and his inner vision opened. He came to know that all that was of universal piety consisted in restraint. In this way the Buddha set the 'Wheel of Law' in motion. The gods living on earth shouted out, "The Buddha has set 'the wheel of Law' in motion at Isipatana migadāya in Benares." [12]

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age bears an inscription about Āryasatya e. g. 'Chattāya-imaṇi bhikhave ariya-sachchani etc.' Vide chapter V for details.

12. On the Asoka pillar of Sarnath and many other finds

No one here will be able to retard its progress, be he a Śraman, a Brāhmaṇa, a god, or Māra or Brahmā. Hearing the words of the gods living on Earth the 'Chaturmahārājika gods' shouted in the same manner. Hearing their words the thirty-three gods, Yama, Tusita, Nirmāṇarati, Paranimitta, Baśavartini, and Brahmakārika gods made the same speech. At that moment, the sound created by them went up to Brahmaloka, ten thousand *lokadhātus* shook, trembled and shivered. A great shout of exultation and a wonderful effulgence surpassing the brilliance of the gods sprang into existence. The Buddha then said in the fulness of his heart "Kauṇḍinya has known it, Kauṇḍinya has known it." In this way Kauṇḍinya got the name of "Ajñāta kauṇḍinya." 13.

Thereafter Kauṇḍinya prayed to the Buddha to convert the Pañch-vargīyas into the new religion. The

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of this place this 'wheel of law' has been used as a symbol. "The preaching of the first sermon is believed to have taken place in 529 B. C., when the Buddha was 35 years of age.

A Pali inscription on a stone umbralla gives the text of Buddha's first sermon.—*Catalogue of the Sarnath museum* p. 2.

13. धम्मचक्क पवत्तन वग्गो दुतियो ।"

Saṁyutta 5, (Pali Text Society) p. 420.

Cf. Rockhill, p. 36, 37.

Buddha said "O Bhikshus, come near, religion has been preached, now bring about the end of your troubles by purification. In this way, the first Buddha *Samāja* was formed at Isipatana Migadaya (14). At the end of this traditinoal account it is written that at that time "there lived only six pious men on earth. These were, the Buddha and the Pañchavargīya Bhikshus." (15).

In very ancient times, at Benares there lived a banker's son named Yaśa (16). He had three mansions to live in the three seasons of dewy spring, summer and the monsoon rains. During his residence at the palace for the rainy season, he had for four months been surrounded with female musicians. He did not come down even to the ground floor of his place. One night he rose from his sleep and found his musicians fast asleep.

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14. *Mahāvagga* 1. 6-10 seq.

Vinaya Piṭaka Ed. by Oldenberg vol I.

15. Cf. In a temple at Amoy, Bishop Smith saw 18 images which were said to represent original disciples of Buddha. Hardy: *Manual Buddhism* p. 25-0.

The figures of Panchavargīya Bhikshus are found incised at the foot of the image of the Buddha dug out at Sarnath.

16. In the '*Legend of Burmese Buddha* Buddha', Yasa is known as Ratha.

The *Vīṇā* was hanging from the neck of some girl, another held the *mṛidaṅga* in her hand, while another was snoring with her mouth wide open, saliva was running down from the mouth of some women and one was talking incoherently in her sleep. Yasa stood aghast looking at the scene before him. He exclaimed that it was a living *Śmaśāna* (cemetry), an object of great trouble and annoyance (17). He repeated this several times. At last, all of a sudden, a spirit of renunciation came upon him. He left home. (18). There was no one at the door of the house or at the city-gate. He went away to Isipatan-migadāya to the north of Benares. Then, it was dawn. All the quarters glowed in the serene smile of the morn. The Buddha was that time pacing over the "*Chaṅkramaṇa.*" Finding the banker's son at a distance, he got down from the " Chaṅkramaṇa" and sat upon his seat. Yasa took his seat at a little distance from him and exclaimed with a heart filled with emotions, " What a great

17. "The nature and condition of the body constitute indeed a truly heavy burden and gives a great deal of trouble and affliction." *Burmese Buddha* p. 120,

18. Here is a similar story in the *Parinirvāṇa Jataka* of the Buddha.

trouble, a great annoyance!" The Buddha said to him "There is no trouble, no annoyance at this place. Come here and sit by me. I shall give you religious instruction." Then, Yasa saluted the Buddha and took his seat at a respectful distance from him. Then he gave him instruction on charity, conduct, heaven, renunciation, doing good to others, *Saṁkleṣha*, freedom from desires and non-killing. When He came to know that Yasa's mind was soft and serene, he gave him the highest teaching of Buddhism "All objects that are born (Samudāya) (19) are full of misery; restraint is the only right path." Having heard the advice of the Buddha, Yasa felt himself free from anger and other passions and looked like a piece of white cloth capable of taking any hue.] (20). At the house of Yasa, his mother missed him and brought the matter to the notice of her husband. He sent many men in quest of his son and at last came to know that he was living at Isipatana-Migadāya. Then, the banker came to this place in search of his son. When he came to the Buddha, he told him every thing about the renunciation

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19. समुदाय according to the Buddhists means 'all objects that spring into existence'.

20. *Burmese Buddha* p. 121.

of the world by Yasa. The banker also received from the Buddha instructions about '*Mārgapradarsaka*' and the three gems 'Buddha, Dharma and saṃgha.' He became a Upāsaka for life. In the Buddhist mythology, he has been described as the first Upāsaka. Then seeing Yasa seated there, (21) the banker entreated him to save the life of his mother by returning home. Yasa, without making any reply, looked at the face of the Buddha with a steadfast gaze. Then, the father understood that it did not become Yasa to be a householder again. Then, he entreated the Buddha to go to his house with Yasa. He, having promised to comply, the banker saluted him and moved round him and went home. After this, Yasa told the Buddha of his intention of taking *Pravrajyā* and *Upasampadā*. Hearing this, He advised Yasa to observe Brahmacharyya. Some days after this, He went to the house of the banker and gave religious instruction to Yasa's mother and others. All of them became his disciples. Hearing that Yasa had taken *Pravrajyā*, having shaved his hair and beard and having worn a dyed-cloth, four

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21. According to the '*Legend of the Burmese Buddha*' the Buddha kept Yaśa hidden from the sight of his father for some time.

of his friends, who were all house-holders, (22) felt inclined towards *Pravrajyā* and were converted to Buddhism by the Buddha. Within a short time, fifteen more rich men, all of whom were leading the house-holder's life, became disciples of theBuddha. At that time, there were in all sixty Upāsakas on earth (23). This account is given here in as much as their conversion took place at Sārnāth.

At the time of his residence at Isipatana, the Buddha narrated the following Jataka story about a jackal that polluted the water in the reservoir. (24) A certain jackal was in the habit of making water in the reservoir of water meant for the Bhikshus. One day he was near this reservoir when the Sramanas rushed upon him and began to belabour him with their staffs. The jackal being terribly beaten left the place and came there no more. One day the Bhikshus at a religious meeting said to the Buddha that they had not seen

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22. Their names were Subāhu, Punnaji, Gabampati and Bimala.

23. *Mahāvagga* (Text) p. 15 for the Tebetan version, look up Rockhill's *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 38-39.

In the Tibetan biography this story has been briefly given.

24. *Jātaka* (11 354.)

there the jackal that polluted their drinking water after the day on which he was beaten. Hearing this, the Buddha said that as in the present age, so in days of yore, too, this jackal was the pollutor of the reservoir of water. So saying, he narrated to them an old story. He said that in by gone days the self-same place was called Isipatana and that the same reservoir of water was there. Then Bodhisattva was born in a certain house in Benares. He took *Pravrajyā* in due time and lived at Isipatana surrounded by the hermits. At that time one day this jackal polluted the reservoir and was going away. The hermits somehow managed to catch him and brought him to Bodhisattva. While conversing with the jackal he sang a *gāthā* to the following effect:—

"O good-looking one, why have you polluted the wooden reservoir of the hermits who live in the forest and practise life-long austerities?"

Hearing this the jackal also sang a gāthā to this effect:—

"It is a Dharma (pious act) of the jackals to make water wherever they drink water. This is being continued from generation to generation. It does not become you to make me give it up."

Hearing this Bodhisattva sang this *gāthā* :—

"If this be your pious act then what is impiety to you? I do not think that you have any distinction between piety and impiety. Be off from here, come here no more."

The jackal went away. From that time forward he was not seen there any more.

Buddhaghosha in his gloss on "Mahāpadāna Sūtta" says that "It was Isipattan Migadāya that came to be called Dharmachakrapravartana"

When commenting on the word Buddhaghosh says as follows :—

"In those days Isipatana (Skt. Rishipatana) was known as a blessed garden. It was given with the object that the deer might live there in safety ; for this reason it came to be called Mrigadāya (Skt. Mrigadāya). The expression "खेमे मिगदाये" has been used in reference to this fact. Gautama and other Buddhas dropped here from the skies in order to give religious instruction." (The gloss also alludes to Gautama Buddha's coming there on foot).

Isipatana Migadāya has been described as the scene of *Nandīyavatthu* (25). Hearing the teachings of

(25) Dhammapada, 16th Vagga, 9th Vatthu.

Buddha, Nandiya thought that it was a pious thing to make a gift of houses to the *Saṅgha.* Accordingly he built a *Chatuhsālā* with four chambers and a number of seats. And he made the Buddha the manager of the house and gave it to the Saṅgha. This house stood in Isipatana Mahāvihāra.

After twelve years, Bodhisattva came down from 'Tusitabhavana.' The "Śuddhāvāsa' gods sent information to the Pratyeka Buddhas (26) calling upon them to quit the Buddha Kshetras. Then, those Pratyeka Buddhas finished their saying and attained *Parinivvāṇa.* In the great forest at a distance of half a yojana from Benares there lived 500 Pratyeka Buddhas. (27) They all uttered their prophecies separately and

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(26) According to Buddhists, "Pacceka-Buddha" (Pratyeka Buddha) was not "enlightened" (Samma-Sambuddha). For only a special penance made possible Buddha's appearance as 'Enlightened'. "Buddha" by Oldenberg p. 120 footnote.

(27) We learn from ancient Pali literature that the Pratyeka Buddhas flourished at a time when the *Samyaka Sambuddhas* had not descended on earth and no *Sangha* had been established by them. But according to the works of a ("Apadana" folke of the Phayre mss), later date the Pratyeka Buddha existed not only in those days but also during the time of the Buddha. For the

attained Nirvāṇa. The attainment of Nirvāṇa by them was complete, when they had risen to the sky. Their material bodies, consisting of flesh and blood, were reduced to ashes by the humour of fire and fell to the ground.

The Ṛṣis fell here and hence this place came to be called "Ṛṣipatana." (28) The French scholar Senart does not admit that the name Isipatana comes from Ṛṣipatana. He says that besides this name two other names of the place are known *viz.* Ṛṣipattana and Ṛṣivadana. According to him this place was called Ṛṣipattana which name in course of time came to be corrupted into Isipatana. He says that the legend above was to support the latter name.

We think that the view of Senart is reasonable. It is recorded in Mahāvastu that before their fall the Pratyeka Buddhas lived at Mahāvana at a distance of half a yojana from Benares. As they were five hundred in number, it is but natural that the place where they lived should be called the *pattana* of the Ṛṣis. It is not

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Buddha said in one place that barring himself there was men on earth to equal the Pratyeka Buddhas.

(28) "ऋषयोऽत्र पतिता ऋषिपतनम्" (Le Mahāvastu) Vol. I, p. 359).

unnatural for pattana to be corrupted into 'vadana'. According to the rules of Prakrita 'प' is changed into 'ब' and त into द. Hence 'Rishipattana' might have at one time been called 'Rishivadana'(29). The word ऋषिवदन 'Rishivadana'-occurs in Mahāvastu—ऋषिवदनस्मि pp. 43, 307 ; ऋषिवदने मृगदाये pp. 323, 324. The word ऋषिपत्तन, Rishipattana, also may be found in this book (See pp. 366-68). This name also occurs in the gāthās of the Lalitavistara.

Now the question that calls for solution is about 'Migadāya' and 'Migadava'. A story bearing on this matter resembling the birth-story of the Banian Deer (30) is met with in the Mahāvastu. The story is this :—

"Once in this wide forest-tract, a certain deer king of the name of Rohaka had taken upon himself the protection of a herd consisting of a thousand deer. He

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(29) The word ऋषिवदन occurs in the Chinese books and in Divyāvadāna. Divyāv p. 393, A-yu-wang-ching, Ch' 2 ; The Divyav. p. 464. Itsing takes the name to mean 'the fall of the Rishis'. But Fahian says rather confidently that a Pratyeka Buddha was the author of of the name "Risipattana".

30. Jātaka, I. 149

As this story occurs in Hiuen Tsang's account it is not given heres.

had two sons, one being named Nyagrodha and the other Visākha. From his herd, he gave five hundred deer to one son and the remaining five hundred to the other. Brahmadatta, the then king of Kāśī, frequently came to that forest on hunting excursions and killed a good many of the deer. The number of the deer that were wounded by him and met death entering the bushes,—the deep parts of the forest, the tracts covered with thorny plants and reeds,—was greater than that of those that were actually killed by him. The dead deer in those parts became food for crows, vultures and other birds. One day, the deer-king Nyagrodha said unto his brother Viśākha, "we desire to bring it to the notice of the king that more deer are being wounded by him and eaten up by the crows and vultures than he actually kills when out on a hunting excursion. We shall send to the king one deer daily, who will enter his *Mahānasa* of his own accord. In this way the herd may probably be saved from wholesale destruction."

His brother Viśākha replied that they would do so. Just at this time the King of Kāśī had been out ahunting. Surrounded by soldiers armed with swords, bows and other weapons, he saw the two deer-kings advancing towards him. Seeing that they were coming

without fear and hesitation he gave this order to one of his generals,—"you are to see to it that none may put them to death. They are not terrified at the sight of the soldiers; on the contrary they are coming towards me; it seems to me that they are doing so with a definite object in view." In obedience to the order of the king, the general pushed away the soldiers to the right and the left and made a way for them. Then the two deer approached the king and bowed unto him touching his knee. The king then asked them what business they had and what question they had to ask. Then they spoke these words to the king in the language of man,—"Your Majesty, several hundreds of us live in this forest within your kingdom. As your cities, towns, villages and other seats of men are beautified by men, cows, bullocks, and many bipeds and quadrupeds and other animals, so forests also look beautiful on account of asylums, rivers, springs and deer and birds. We look upon your Majesty as the very ornament of these places. All these bipeds and quadrupeds live under the sole rule of your Majesty.

They have placed themselves under your Majesty's protection; hence it is the bounden duty of your Majesty to take care of them and to protect them, no matter

whether they live in villages, forests or hilly regions. Your Majesty is their sole Lord; they have no other King. When your Majesty is out for hunting then a number of deer is needlessly killed at a time. Many of them being wounded with the arrow, enter thorny woods and fields of *kāśa* grass where after their death they are eaten up by crows and other birds; those that meet death in this way are more numerous than those that are killed by you. In this way, your Majesty is being led to sin. If your Majesty be pleased to order, we, two deer-kings, shall send for your kitchen one deer a day. This deer will be taken from each herd on alternate days. If this be done, there will be nothing to prevent your Majesty's feasting upon flesh and still the deer will be saved from meeting simultaneous death."

Hearing these words, the King of Kāśī granted their prayer. Accordingly, he asked the ministers to take care that no one might kill any deer there. The King having left for his city, the deer-kings convened an assembly of all the deer and consoled them in very many ways. They informed them that the king would no more be out a-hunting but that they should have to send him one deer a day. Thereafter, they counted all the deer and divided them into two principal herds.

From that time forward each began to send a deer to the King's Court on alternate days.

At one time it was the turn of a pregnant female deer of Viśākha's herd to go to the King's kitchen. In due time the head-deer asked her to go. She said to him that she had been carrying two young ones in her womb and that it would be well if her going could be postponed till her delivery. Thereupon the head-deer brought this matter to the notice of the King of the herd who ordered that some other deer should go in her stead. But all the other deer declined to go till their turn was come. Then the female deer went to Nyagrodha, the King of the other herd and laid her case before him. But, in that herd, too, no one agreed to go. Then their King Nyagrodha addressed them all and said,—"you may rest assured that when I have given her assurance of safety she must not be put to death. I am ready to go to the King's *Mahānasa* (kitchen) in her stead."

Then the deer king issued out of the forest and proceeded along the path to Vārāṇasī. Whoever met him on the way was charmed at his flawless beauty and followed him. Seeing him pursuing his way surrounded by men the citizens said to one another, "It is the king

of the deer. All the herd having been exhausted he himself has been going to the King's Mahānasa. We shall approach the King of Kāśī and pray to him to save the life of this deer king who is the very ornament of this place." They also said many other things. As soon as he entered the *Mahānasa* all the citizens prayed for the safety of his life on the ground of his being good-looking, gentle and the ornament of the garden round the city. Then the King caused him to be brought from the Mahānasa and asked him why he had come there himself. He having narrated the whole thing from the beginning to the end, the King and all others who were present there were struck by his righteousness. Then the King said to him, "He who sacrifices his life for the sake of another is never a beast. On the other hand, we are so many beasts, because we are bereft of all sense of righteousness. I am glad to hear of your self-sacrifice for the sake of the doe. I also grant safety to all the deer for your sake, go to your place and live there fearlessly." The King proclaimed this throughout the length and breadth of the city with the ringing of bells.

Gradually this incident came to the notice of the Gods. The King of the Gods created thousands of deer

in order to test the righteousness of the King of Kāśī. The people of Kāśī were put to much inconvenience by these deer and lodged a complaint with the King.

Then Nyagrodha came to his own place and told the doe to go to the herd of Viśākha. But she declined to go, saying that she would live in the herd of Nyagrodha whether she might live or die and sang a gātha to that effect.

The people of Kāśī thus spoke to their King—

उदज्यते जनपदा राष्ट्रं स्फीतं विनश्यति।
मृगा धान्यानि खादन्ति तं निषेध जनाधिप॥
उदज्यतु जनपदो स्फीतं राष्ट्रं विनश्यतु।
न त्वेवं मृगराजस्य वरं दत्वा मृषं भणे॥

English Translation:—The, country is passing through a crisis, the prosperous kingdom is going to ruin. The deer are eating our corn, O King, please take steps to prevent them.

Let the country pass through a crisis, let the prosperous kingdom go to ruin. I have given assurances of safety to the deer king. I can't tell a falsehood now.

The King gave them to understand that he could by no means withdraw the assurance given to them.

"मृगानां दायो दिन्नो मृगदायेति ऋषिपत्तनः।"

This place came to be called 'Migadāya Ṛṣ pattana' as it was given to the deer(31).

The word Dāya दाय) means both gift and forest. Now the question may arise—what is the sense in which the word has been used here. In Childer's Pāli Dictionary the use of the word in the sense of forest has been given (32). Neither Senart nor any other foreign scholar has said anything on this point. They have simply given a detailed history of the various forms in which the story of the deer Nyagrodha has been given in the ancient books (33).

We are inclined to think that the ancient name of this place was Migadāva (forest) (34). It might have

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(31) Mahāvastu, p. 366. Itsing and other Chinese writers have used the word 'Silun or Silulin' to translate the word 'Mrigadāya.' The Chinese words means 'the land given to the deer.'

(32) See Childer's *Pali Dictionary*, p. 114.

(33) Benfey's Panchatantra, p. 183. Also in the Memoirs (1-36 1) of Hiuen-Tsang. General Cunningham says that this scene has been incised on a tablet of stone at Bharatpur (p. L. XLII 2). It bears the inscription 'Isimigajātakam.' But Dr. Hoernlie has contradicted his views in the '*Indian Antiquary.*'

(34) 'Some Literary References to the Isipatana' by Brindavan Bhattacharya, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIV, p. 76.

acquired this Sanskrit name as it was the grazing ground of many deer. In course of time, it came to be called Migadāya, on account of the peculiarity of pronunciation in the Pāli language. Perhaps, even then the name had the meaning of a forest. Subsequently, when it was time for writing stories about each anecdote connected with the Buddha, then this cradle of Buddhism came to be the scene of the story of the deer Nyagrodha. From that time the ancient meaning of the word dāya fell into disuse and it came to be used in the Buddhist literature only in the sense of gift. This seems to be the rough sketch of the use of the word Mṛigadāva or Mṛigadāya.

No antiquarian, whether foreign or Indian, has as yet properly dealt with the age and origin of the modern the name of Sāranātha. There is ample evidence to show that name of the place is of modern origin. In the remotest age of its importance it was called 'Isipatana Migadāya.' The whole body of Buddhist literature, specially Pali literature, bears testimony to this fact. It had also been known by this name as long as the influence of Buddhism was supreme in this place, viz. during the reign of the Mauryas and of Kaniṣka as well as at the time of the pilgrimage of Fa Hian and Hiuen Tsang.

When this place was devastated by the Mahommedans, the temple of the God Sāraṅganātha was not in existence. If it had existed at the time it would surely have been destroyed by the invaders. Under these circumstances it may be held that the temple of Sāraṅganātha was built here in consequence of the same movement which led to the establishment of a Hindu holy place at Bodhagayā after the decline of Buddhism. The meaning of the compound word 'Sāraṅganātha' is 'Lord of the deer'. The ancient name of the place was Mṛgadāva and according to the Jātaka stories and other works the Buddha was its lord. Hence it seems that the Hindus have, following ancient tradition, been worshipping the deer-king Nyagrodha or the Buddha as Mahādeva Sāraṅganātha (35), as they had accepted Dharma of the Buddhistic 'three jewels' as their God 'Dharma Ṭhākura (36). It cannot be ascertained with precision when the worship of this God began. If it be admitted that Sāranāth Vihāra near

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(35) The God Śiva is in many places represented with a deer in his left hand. Hence it may be natural to call the God Sāraṅganātha. The tank near the temple of the God at Sarnath is called 'Sāraṅgatāla'.

(36) आद्येर गम्भीरा, p. 246.

Kāśi was a great centre of Buddhism, that the Brāhmaṇas had at the instigation of Kumārila set fire to it and that Cunningham, Thomas and other antiquarians removed from it half burnt metals and heaps of ashes it may be said that the temple at Sarnath was built when the disciples of Śaṅkarāchārya following the footsteps of the preceptor had been building temples of the God Śiva at every important centre of Buddhism. If this view be accepted, the date of the construction of the temple was the end of the eighth century. If, on the other hand, following the majority of the antiquarians it be held that the destruction of the Vihāra at Sārnāth was the work of the Mahommedans, then it may be said that this temple was built a little before the close of the rule of the Sena Dynasty. Lakshmaṇa Sena erected a monument of victory at Kāśī. It is superfluous to add that his descendants were worshippers of the God Śiva. The word Sāraṅganātha became Sāranātha according to the rules governing the change of Sanskrit words into Prākṛta.

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CHAPTER II.

Sarnath in the historic age.

From an examination of Indian antiquities it is evident that the history of India before the invasion of Alexander the Great is enshrouded in darkness. What accounts, we have of this period consist mainly of traditions and legends and as such they cannot be accepted as historically authentic. The account of Sāranātha that we have collected from the Buddhist literature belongs to this pre-historic age and hence its historical value is not very great. Now, we propose to discuss the relation between the history of Sāranātha and the History of India. It may be mentioned here that the whole of this subject depends upon the results of modern excavation. Therefore the accounts given here cannot be taken to be conclusive.

Of all the Indian monarchs of historical reputation Aśoka was the first to come in touch with Sā anāth. He had his edicts engraved on rocks and pillars in various parts of his wide empire. In this place also he had an edict engraved on a beautiful pillar in the year 242 B. C. This pillar bearing the inscription

in question has of late been dug out of the earth. This inscription being deciphered many things of great historical value have come to light. We learn from this edict that in those days the religious tie had become very loose in the Buddhist Saṅgha. For this reason His Imperial Majesty passed an order that the dissenting members of the Saṅgha should be made to wear white apparel and should be expelled from it. The Emperor had also given instruction to his officers for the promulgation of this order throughout the length and breadth of the empire. There are similar pillar edicts at Sanchi and Allahabad. In these inscriptions, there is an order rendering the attendance of the public at the Vihāra compulsory on every 'Uposatha' day. From these things, it is clear that the Emperor Aśoka was the head of all the Saṅghas and that he was always careful to take adequate steps whenever there was any breach of discipline in them.

Besides this edict, many other things have been exsumed at Sāranātha which show that the emperor had bestowed great care on this place. Among the ruins of Sāranātha, there are traces of a brick "Stupa" a little way in the South from the lower portion of the pillar of Aśoka. In 1793-1794 Jagat Singh, the Dewan of Benares had broken this "Stupa" and had

carried bricks and other materials from its site in order to make there a Mahālle named Jagatganj after his own name. Hence for convenience' sake, the authorities of the Archæological Department call the site of this Stupa, 'Jagat Singh Stupa'. They have ascertained that the stupa belonged to the age of Aśoka.

The third thing that connects Aśoka with this place is a stone-railing. It was discovered by Mr. Oertel at the bottom of the chamber to the South of the 'Main shrine' of the Vihāra and it may still be found there. From its wonderful smoothness and the peculiarity of its shape, the antiquarians have concluded that it was constructed during the time of Aśoka. According to Dr. Vogel this railing was built to protect the place where the Buddha had set his 'Wheel of Law' in motion or any other place of sanctity. In the opinion of Mr. Dayaram Sahni of the Archæological Department it stood round the pillar of Aśoka and had subsequently been removed to this place. But he doubts whether Aśoka's pillars had any railings around them. We have got proofs of a pillar erected by Dharmāśoka having a railing around it in the stupa of Bharhut[5] Under these circumstances,

5. Vide 'पाषाणेरकथा' by Mr. Rakhaldas Banerji, p. 43.

the inferences that have been drawn by him may be accepted as true.

The three relics, mentioned above, establish a close connection between Aśoka and the Vihār at Sāranātha. We are inclined to hold that Dharmāśoka came to Sāarnātha on a visit. In 249 B.C.(?) he made a pilgrimage to Kusinagar, Kapilāvāstu, Śrāvasti, Bodhgayā and some other places sacred to the Buddhists. In the list of the names of the places visited by him there is no mention of Sāranātha. But it seems improbable that Asoka did not visit the place where the Buddha had preached his religion for the first time. He had erected a stone pillar at each of the places visited by him in the course of his pilgrimage. From the stone pillar at Sārnāth bearing the 'religious inscription' of Asoka we are led to believe that he had most probably visited this holiest place of the Buddhists in the course of his pilgrimage[6]

No relic of any other Maurya King than of Asoka has as yet been discovered at Sārnāth. After the fall of the Mauryas, Pushyamitra founded the Sunga or Mitra

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6. The historian Vincent A. Smith has taken it for granted that Asoka had visited Sārnāth although he has given no proof in support of his statement.

Dynasty in 184 A.D. He was an orthodox Hindu and performed the horse-sacrifice and various other ceremonies in order to re-establish Brāhmanism in opposition to Buddhism. He also fought against the Buddhist King Menander. Under these circumstances it cannot at all be expected that he or his descendants should be in touch with the Vihāra of Sārnāth. As a matter of fact, no historical relic of the rulers of this line is to be met with at Sarnath. Still very few relics belonging to the age of these kings though in no way connected with them have been dug out at Sarnath. "During the palmy days of Buddhism, the devoted votaries of the Buddha raised subscriptions and erected big stupas with huge blocks of stone. They deposited the bone of the Buddha at the centre of the stupa and with great reverence worshipped the structure as the union of the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. They also constructed large stone railings around each stupa. The railings were placed on pillars, each pair of which was held together by cross-bars. These were so nicely polished that if the hand was applied to them, it slipped off. On each pillar, each cross-bar and each block of the railing, the names of the subscribers were inscribed".[7] Some pillars of such a

7. Preface to पाषाणेर कथा by M. M. Haraprasad Sastri p. 3.

railing have been found on all sides of the pillar of Asoka at Sarnath. The names of the Buddhistic subscribers are engraved on them in Brāhmi Script. In Bodh-Gayā also there are railing-pillars of the same size. They all belong to the age of the Sungas[8]. Besides these there are two relics of the Sunga age. These are, a bell-shaped capital discovered on the north-east of the 'main-shrine' (in the list of the museum it bears no. D. (g) 1. 1.) and the pieces of a broken stone head found at the north-western corner of it during the excavation work of the year 1906—1907, (its number in the list of the museum is (B. 1). No relic of the kings of the Kāṇva Dynasty who came after the Sungas has as yet been discovered at Sarnath.

The Śakas had entered the north-western parts of India before the rule of the Kāṇva Dynasty came to an end. Some of the provincial governors under these Śaka kings asserted their independence in the first century A. D. and ruled at Muttra, Taxila and other places under the title of satraps or great satraps. The inscription of a satrap of the name of Sodās or Songdās or Sudas assodās has been discovered on the lion-pillar

8. बांगलार इतिहास by R. D. Banerji Esq. p. 34.

found at Muttra. The date of this inscription is 15 A. D.[9] An inscription of a king of the name of Aśvaghosha written in the same character as this one is to be seen on the pillar of Asoka at Sarnath.[10] Under these circumstances it may be said that towards the beginning of the first century of the Christian Era the Śaka satrap exercised some control over the Vihāra at Sārnāth.

Towards the middle of the first century A. D. the Kushans belonging to the Yuchchi tribe broke up the Śaka kingdoms and established one for themselves. The first king of this line was Kadphises I. His territories extended over Kabul, Gāndhār and the Punjab. His son Kadphises II pushed his conquests further into the heart of India up to Benares. But from his coins and other relics, we learn that he was a devoted votary of the God Śiva. Hence, it is not probable that he could have any connexion with Sārnāth, the fountain-

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9. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1845, 525; 1904, 703; 1905, 154.

10. Babu Rakhaldas Banerji has shewn similarity in the character of these two inscriptions. Vide *Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, B.S. 1312, No. 4. Another short inscription of the king Aśvaghosha has been found at Sārnāth.

head of Buddhism. It fact, no relic of this monrch has as yet been found at this place.

After him came Kaniṣka the greatest of the kings of this line. In his early life he was a fire-worshipper and like Akbar worshipped a number of Gods and Goddesses Late in life, he felt a special liking for Buddhism and did all in his power to secure the improvement of this religion. He was the founder of the Mahāyāna School of the Buddhists and just as Aśoka was very famous among the Hīnayānists, so he too was a renowned king among the Buddhists of the other school. There is no lack of evidence to show his connection with Sāranātha. The greatest proof of this is afforded by the most ancient and biggest statue of Bodhisattva together with three inscriptions. According to the inscriptions in question this image was established in the third year of the reign of Kaniṣka. According to other testimonies, it was made at Muttra and then presented to the Vihāra at Sāranātha by BhikṣuBala and Puṣyabuddhī. Two more inscriptions of Bhikṣu Bala to this effect have been discovered, one at Muttra and the other at Śrāvastī. It is evident from this inscription of Sāranātha that "Benares lay within the dominion of Kaniṣka and that it was ruled over by a Satrap under a 'Great Satrap.'

Most probably the 'Great Satrap' had his head-quarters at Muttra. Bhikṣu Bala and Puṣyabuddhi were surely men of influence at the Emperor's court because the Śaka satraps and 'great satraps' were never at the beck and call of all Bhikṣus. Most probably they belonged to the royal family. They visited holy places of the Buddhists wearing pilgrim's rags and established an image at each of the places visited by them."[11]

Benares was probably being ruled over by a satrap under a 'great satrap' since the time of the king Aśvaghoṣa. The Kushan Emperor Kaniṣka allowed the continuation of this practice of the Śaka kings. No relic of Vāsiṣka, Huviṣka, Vāsudeva and other descendants of Kaniṣka has as yet been found at Sāranātha. It must be said here that it appears from their coins that these kings were more inclined towards Hinduism than to Buddhism. Though none of these kings has been mentioned by name yet a host of Buddhistic images found at the place bear testimony to the influence of the Kushan age.

After the downfall of the Kushans the Guptas established their sway in Northern India towards the

11. English rendering of an extract from *Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, 1312 B. S., Part IV p. 173.

beginning of the fourth century of the Christian Era. Though Chandra Gupta, Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta II, Kumāra Gupta, Skanda Gupta and other kings of this line were Hindus in religion, they were not hostile to Buddhism. From a number of inscriptions, we learn that they had made many grants for the protection of the Buddhistic Community in several parts of their wide dominion. The early Hindu kings never persecuted the followers of other religions. The king Puṣyamitra was an orthodox Hindu and performed the horse-sacrifice and other ceremonies. But he never attempted to ruin Sāranātha and other centres of Buddhism. The Gupta kings too performed horse-sacrifices. But they also made grants for Buddhistic Vihāras. The king Harṣa also was tolerant of all forms of religion.[12] Hence, the conclusion is that though the inscription of no other king than Kumār Gupta II has been discovered at Sāranātha yet in the Gupta age no obstruction to the improvement of Buddhism had been caused there. There is no lack

(12) The late Dr. V. A. Smith has also admitted this point. "........the conduct of Harsha as a whole proves that *like most of the Sovereigns of Ancient India*, he was ordinarily tolerant of all forms of indigenous religion and willing that all should share in his bounty." Imperial Gazetteer. Vol IV, p.298.

of evidence to support this conclusion. Most of the sculptural and architectural relics of Sāranātha seem to be the work of the Gupta Age. Archaeologists hold that the stupendous 'Dhāmek' stupa and 300 images at the museum of Sāranātha among which one is of the Buddha in the act of setting the 'wheel of Law' in motion belong to the Gupta period. In this age there was a new style in the making of images. We learn from their inscriptions too in the stone railing of the 'Main Shrine' and one in the step of 'Jagatsingh's stupa' that a section of the Hīnayānists called the 'Sarvāstivādins' [13]

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(13) Two hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa* of Buddha, since the time of the Buddhist Council at Vaisāli, several sects have arisen among this Buddhists. The "Sarvāstivādi-Nikāya was composed about this time. Again, three hundred years after the Buddha's *Nirvāṇa*, the principal canonical book of this sect called the "Jñāna-prasthāna Sūtra" was written. In the time of Kaniṣka, Vasumitra wrote one commentary named "Mahābibhāga" on this book. According to Fahien (399-414) this book was much known in Pāṭaliputra. Hiuen-Tsang wrote that Kanauj and thirteen other places were great centres of this Sect. The Tibetan Vinaya (7th-13th Cent. A. D.) belongs to the same sect. I-Tsing (671-695) called all the North Indian people of his time as Sarvāstivādins.

exercised a great influence at Sarnath before the beginning of the Gupta rule. When their influence came to an end in the fourth century, another section of the Hīnayānists, called the Sammitiya, became the most prominent religious community at Sarnath. They retained their power up to the Seventh Century. An inscription of them in the character of the fourth century may be seen on the Aśoka Pillar. Again the Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang saw as many as 1500 members of this sect at Sarnath in the 7th century. [14] The Chinese traveller Fa-Hian who visited India towards the beginning of the 4th century in the reign of Chandragupta II gives the following description[15] of Sarnath:—

Following the course of the river Heng towards the west for 12 *yeon yans* more, he came to the town of *Pholonai*, in the Kingdom of Kiashi. To the north-west of the town, at the distance of 10 li, you come

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He seems to be silent on this sect, being himself Hīnayanistic.- Dr. Tākakāsu's It-sing.

(14) See the 6th Chapter of this book p. XXI.

(15) "The Pilgrimage of Fahien" tr. by J. W. Laidlay (Baptist Mission Press) Calcutta ; 1848), chap. XXXIV. and Legge's Translation (Oxford, 1886). pp. 94-96.

to the temple situated in the Deer-park of the Immortal this deer-park was formerly the station of a *Pychi foe*; there are constantly deer reposing there. When the Honourable of the Age was on the point of accomplishing the law, the Gods sang in the midst of space, "The son of the king *Petsing* embraced ecclesiastical life and studied the doctrine, and in seven days he will be come foe." The *Pichi Foe* having heard this entered *nihouan*; it is on this account he called the place the Garden of the plain of the Deer of the Immortal. Since the Honourable of the Age accomplished the law, men of subsquent times have erected a Chapel in this place.

Foe being desireus of converting *Keonlin* amongst the five men, these five men said amongst themselves, "........To-day, when he shall come, let us be careful not to speak to him." Foe having approached the five men rose and worshipped him.

At the distance of 60 paces to the north of this place, Foe, looking towards the west, sat down and began to turn the wheel of the law........ 20 paces to the north is the place where Foe rehearsed his history to *Mile.* 50 paces south, is the place where

the dragon *I loopo* asked Foe, "After how long a time shall I be delivered from this dragon's body ?" In all those places they have erected towers, amongst which there are two *Seng kia lan* inhabited by ecclesiastics."

In consequence of the invasion of India by the Hunas towards the end of the 5th century, the empire of the Guptas broke down. The time that followed was a dark one for India and hence in this period nothing was done to improve the condition of the Vihāra of Sārnāth. The want of any historical relic of this time proves the truth cf this statement. In the 6th century the Gupta Emperor Narasingh Deo Baladitya defeated and drove away the Huna invaders and restored the rule of the Gupta Dynasty. For this reason, a few relics of Kumāra Gupta II, the son of Bālāditya, the last Gupta Emperor and of Prakaṭāditya of this line are to be met with at Sārnāth. At the foot of the figure of the Buddha bearing B (b) 173 in the list of the museum there is a small inscription of this Kumāra Gupta. Dr. Konow is of opinion that it is an inscription of Kumāra Gupta I [16]. Dr. Vogel on the other hand does not admit that this Kumāra Gupta was a king of the

(16) *Archaeological Survey Reports*, 1906-7 p. 89, 91 and also p. 99, inscription VIII.

Gupta Dynasty[17]. We think that both these scholars are wrong on this point, because from the inscriptions of the three recently discovered images of the Buddha (1915), the actual date of the reign of Kumāra Gupta II is definitely known[18]. Hence there is not the slightest doubt that the previously mentioned inscription is of Kumāra Gupta II. Besides this inscription another inscription of a Gupta King named Prakaṭāditya was discovered at Sarnath long ago. A detailed account of this inscription is given in Dr. Fleet's Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol III.[19]

Some scholars are of opinion that Prakaṭāditya was identical with Prakāśāditya. Many ancient coins of this Prakāśāditya have been discovered in various places of India. Srijut Nagendra Nath Basu Prāchyavidyāmahārṇava is of opinion that this Prakaṭāditya was a brother of Kumāra Gupta and that he and Bālāditya had their capital at Benares. If it be so, it is no wonder that his relic should be found at

(17) *Sarnath Catalogue*. p. 15 footnote.

(18) The date of Kumara Gupta II given in this inscription (vis. G. S. 154=473 A. D.) differs from that given by V. A. Smith and Dr. Fleet, This inscription has not as yet been published.

(19) C. 1, 1. p, 284.

Sārnāth. "From the inscription of Prakaṭāditya we learn that he established an image of Viṣṇu called Muradviṭ and built a very big temple for the God. Most probably that was the beginning of an attempt to convert this Buddhist holy place into a holy place of the Hindus"[20]. Here one thing that deserves special notice remains that one brother Kumāra Gupta II established an image of Buddha while another brother established an image of the God Viṣṇu, and still there was no difference between them. How noble was the spirit of toleration then prevailing in India !

After the downfall of the Gupta Empire in the first half of the seventh Century, Harshavardhana, the King of Thanesvar became the Emperor of Northern India. Like Kaniṣka and Akbar he patronised all forms of religion and himself showed reverence to many of .them There is ample evidence to show his leaning towards Buddhism. One or two relics showing his liking towards Buddhism have been discovered at Sārnāth. From an examination of the blocks of stone and bricks of the 'Dhāmek Stupa' antiquarians have come to the conclusion that the greater portion of it was built by

(20) Translation of an extract from Nagendranath Vasu's काशी परिक्रमा p. 246.

the King Harsha. We are inclined to hold that Harshavardhana never attempted to create a name for himself and loved to conceal himself. This accounts for the absence of any monument connected with his name or any edict setting forth his glory. This may be the reason why there is no inscription of this King at Sārnāth. During the reign of King Harsha, the Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang visited India. He has left the following account of Sārnāth :—

" To the South-West of the *Vihāra* is a stone *stupa* built by Aśokarāja. Although the foundations have given way, there are still 100 feet or more of the wall remaining. In front of the building is a stone pillar about 70 feet high. The stone is altogether as bright as jade. It is glistening, and sparkles like light; and all those who pray fervently before it see from time to time, according to their petitions, figures with good or bad signs. It was here that Tathāgata having arrived at enlightenment, began to turn the wheel of the law (to preach.)

"By the side of this building and not far from it is a *stupa*. This is the spot where Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya and the rest, seeing Bodhisattva going up his austerities,

no longer kept his company, but coming to this place, gave themselves up to meditation.

"By the side of this is a *stupa* where fine hundred Pratyeka Buddhas entered at the same time into Nirvāṇa. There are, more over, three *stupas* where there are traces of the sitting and walking of the three former Buddhas.

"By the side of this last place is a stupa. This is the spot where Maitreya Bodhisattva received assurance of his becoming a Buddha....................

"To the west of this place there is a *stupa*. This is the spot where Śākya Bodhisattva received an assurance.................

"Not far to the South of this spot are traces where the four Buddhas of a bygone age walked for exercise. The length (of the promenade) is about 50 paces and the height of the steps about 7 feet. It is composed of blue stones piled together. Above it is a figure of Tathāgata in the attitude of walking. It is of a singular dignity and beauty. From the flesh-knot on the top of the head there flows wonderfully a braid of hair...............

"Within the precincts of the enclosure there are many sacred vestiges with *vihāras* and *stupas* several

hundred in number. We have only named two or three of these, as it would be difficult to enter into details.

To the west of the *Saṅghārāma* enclosure is a clear lake of water about 200 paces in circuit; here Tathāgata occasionally bathed himself. To the West of this is a great tank about 180 paces round; here Tathāgata used to wash his begging dish.

"To the North of this is a lake about 150 paces round. Here Tathāgata used to wash his robes...........

"By the side of the pool where Tathāgata washed his garments is a great square on which are yet to be seen the trace marks of his *Kāshāya* robe.

"By the side of the lake, and not far off, is a stupa. This is where Bodhisattva, during his preparatory life, was born as a king of elephants, provided with 6 tusks (chhadanta).

"Not far from this, in a great forest, is a Stupa. It was here that Devadatta and Bodhisattva in years gone by, were kings of deer and settled a certain matter. Formerly, in this place, in the midst of a great forest, there were two herds of deer, each 500 in number. At this time, the king of the country wandered about hunting through the plains and morasses. Bodhisattva,

king of deer, approaching him, said, "Mahārāj! You set fire to the spaces enclosed as your hunting ground and shoot your arrows and kill all my followers. Before the sun rises, they lie about corrupting and unfit for food. Pray let us each day offer you one deer for food, which the king will then have fresh and good and we shall prolong our life a little day by day." The king was pleased at the proposition, and turned his chariot and went back home. So, on each day, a deer from the respective flocks was killed.

Now, among the herd of Devadatta, there was a doe big with young, and when her turn came to die, she said to her lord, "Although I am ready to die, yet it is not my child's turn".

The king of the deer was angry, and said, "who is there but values life ?

The deer answered with a sigh, "But, O King, it is not humane to kill that which is unborn."

She then told her extremity to Bodhisattva the king of the deer. He replied, "Sad, indeed, the heart of the loving mother grieves for that which is not yet alive. I to-day will take your place and die." Going to the royal gate, the people who travelled along the road passed the news along and said in a loud voice,

"That great king of the deer is going now towards the town." The people of the capital, the Magistrates, and others, hastened to see.

The King hearing of it, was unwilling to believe the news; but when the gate-keeper assured him of the truth, then the King believed it. Then, addressing the deer king replied "There is a female in the herd big with young, whose turn it was to die; but my heart could not bear to think that the young, not yet born, should perish so. I have, therefore, come in her place."

"The King, hearing it, sighed and said, "I have indeed the body of a man, but am as a deer. You have the body of a deer, but are as a man." Then for pity's sake he released the deer, and no longer required a daily sacrifice. Then he gave up that forest for the use of the deer, and so it was called "the forest given to the deer." (21)

After the death of Harshavardhan his vast empire fell to pieces and anarchy set in in Northern India. The rulers of the smaller states were eager to establish

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(21) *Travels of Hiuen-Tsang* translated by Beal Vol II. pp. 46-61 also by Watters, Vol II. pp. 46-54, and *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, p. 29. *Introduction* XX, IX, By It-Sing tr. by Takakasu.

imperial sway and brought about a civil war which ended in their own ruin. But, even, during these days of political degeneration, the Vihār at Sārnāth maintained intact its importance and attracted pilgrims from abroad. The words of the Chinese traveller It-sing may be quoted here in support of this statement. When starting from his country towards the end of the 7th Century he said,—"I am often led to think of the far away Migadava." Then having described the Kamandulu, the drinking vessel, clothings, umbrellas and other simple articles of the Bhikṣhus he said, thus :—"Rājagṛha, Bodhi-tree, the Gṛdhra peak, Mṛgadāva, that place white as the wings of crane, the sacred place full of *Sāl* trees the lonely forest censecrated to the squirrel—to the chaityas of these places, thousands of Bhikkhus used to come from different quarters every day."

From the description given by It-Sing of the various Buddhistic sects then existing in India it appears that at that time the Sarvāstivādins had again risen in power at Sarnath.

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Chapter III

Sarnath during the Middle-ages

The period that followed the death of King Harsha was a sad one for India. As there was no strong central power the whole of Northern India was in a great turmoil and a number of petty kingdoms sprang into existence. This chaotic condition continued for three centuries from 650 A. D. to 950 A. D. We see some powerful kingdoms established towards the middle of the tenth century. But the Mahomedan invasions in the twelfth century dealt a death blow at almost all the kingdoms in Northern India. India, during the middle ages lasting for about six centuries, had not been subjected to any devastating foreign invasion. Consequently, there was ample time to effect many improvements in the religion of the Hindus. The difference between Hinduism and Buddhism scarcely existed and as a matter of fact some sort of compromise had been made between these two religions. It is impossible to say in many cases which of the idols of this period belonged to the Hindus and which to the Buddhists. Instances of this had on many occasions been met with at Sarnath itself. For this

reasno though Hindu monarchs ruled the country, the Vihar of Sarnath was left unmolested and was free to exercise its religion and to carry out the work of artistic decoration of the place. We learn from relics of art, inscriptions and contemporary historical accounts that during this age, a number of Chaityas were built at Sarnath, that foreign travellers visited this place, that the Sthaviras practised their religion and that various improvements were effected there. The sources from which materials are to be drawn for the construction of history of Sarnath during the middle ages fall under three heads, viz (1) architecture, (2) religious sects (3) royal authority. We shall try to narrate the history of Sarnath in this age with the help of the materials at hand.

Towards the middle of the 8th century of the Christian Era, the kingdom of Kāṇyakubja was most powerful in Northren India. From "*Gour baho*" a work of the poet Vākpati, the boundaries of the territories of

(1) Although confined to the Doab and southern Oudh as far as Benares it (the Kingdom of Kanauj) is still **Imp. Gaz. Vol. II p. 310.

(2) कायस्थपरिक्रमा—by Babu Nagendranath Basu Prāchya-vidyāmahārṇava p 246.

Yaśovarmā, the king of Kāṇyakubja, can be ascertained. According to this work Vārānasi and Bauddha Bārānasi were included in the kingdom of Yasovarmā. (1) In 731, this king sent an embassy to China. Though he tried his utmost to restore the religion of the Vedas and though Benares became a great centre of Vedic study through his effotrs (2) yet he had done nothing to hinder the progress of the Vihar at Sarnath. The fame of this place attracted in the year 741 the Chinese traveller O-Kung, who came here after visiting the Mahābodhi Vihara. He says that the Buddha set the 'Wheel of Law' in motion at this place. (3).

Another Chinese traveller of the name of Wang Hiunentse travelled in India in 657 before O-Kung. But he makes no mention of Mṛgadāva or the deer park in his accounts. (4)

After Yaśovarmā's death Vajrāudha and Indrāyudha successively ruled Kāṇyakubja. They had no faith in the religion of the Vedas. Hence it seems that they were favourably inclined towards Buddhism and

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(3) Journal Asiatique 1895 Vol, II pp. 356—366. This has not been referred to by any previous writer on Sarnath.

(4) Levi's article "Les missions de Wang Hiuentse dans Inde" J. A. 1900.

that during their time the Vihāra of Sarnath lying within their kingdom received a great chance of improvement. In the first quarter of the 9th century, Indrāyudha was deposed by the Pala King Dharmapal. This conqueror who was a Buddhist in religion made Chakrāyudha king of Kāṇyakubja. But the reign of this King did not last long. In 810, Nāgabhaṭa, the King of Pratihāra in Gurjjara drove him from his kingdom and established his own dynasty in Kāṇyakubja. Mihirabhoja or Bhojadeva I. of this line marched from the hill fort of Chitrakuṭa in about 843 A. D. and conquered Kāṇyakubja. (5) He assumed the title of "Ādivarāha" and the whole of Aryāvarta lay within his territories (6) Hence it is certain that for some time the Bauddha Vihara at Sarnath was under his rule. He was a pious Hindu. (7) But he

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(5) वङ्गेर का जातीय इतिहास (राजन्यकाण्ड) p. 162

(6) V. A. Smith's Early History of India 2nd Edition P. 350.

(7) Bhojadeva was a member of the Pratihāra dynasty of Gurjjara. Hence some may think that he was of non-Aryan extraction. But his son's preceptor the poet Rājaśekhara has described Mahendrapala as a "scion of the race of Raghu." There is no reasonable ground to hold that the poet was wrong.

भाव कहिज्जदु एदं को भणइ आणिवह सिहण्डो ।
रहुउलचुडामणिणो महेन्द्रपालस्स को अ गुरु ॥ कर्पूरमंजरी. प्रस्तावना

never disfavoured Buddhism. It was during his reign that the Jayapāla the brother of Devapāla and the father of Vigrahapāla I. built ten Chaityas at Sarnath. We learn this from his inscription discovered at Sarnath. (8). This Jayapāla was the right hand of Devapāla in defeating his enemies and extending his dominions. He vanquished the kings of Prāgjyotisha and Utkala. (9). He has been described as the king of Northern Rāḍha by Nārāyana Bhaṭṭa the editor of Chhandaga pariśiṣṭa (10). He made rich gifts to the learned scholar Umāpati on the occasion of the Śrāddha ceremony of his father. On one hand he performed the ceremonies of the Hindus and on the other he showed favour towards Buddhism by building Chaityas for the Buddhists. In fact, there was no great difference in the manners and customs of the Hindus and the Buddhists of this age. According to history Jayapāla reigned towards the end of the 9th century. This is corroborated by the letters in his inscription. In this in-

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(8) Sarnath Museum Catalogue No. D (f) 54. Vide Chapter VI.

(9) Vide गौड़लेखमाला pp. 57-58 and गौड़राजमाला by Babu Ramāprasād Chanda p.29.

(10) Vide वाङ्गलार इतिहास by Babu Rakhaldas Banerji.

scription all men have been desired to become 'all-knowing' or Buddha. This indicates that he had the greatest regard for Buddhism and that he held Sarnath to be a sacred place. The king died in 890 A. D. Immediately after this, Vigrahapal, King of Gauḍa occupied Kāṇyakubja for some time and issued coins in his own name. (11). From this it is clear that in the 9th and 10th centuries the Palas and the Gurjjaras struggled hard for supremacy in Northern India. Consequently, Benares and Sarnath were at one time under the Pala Kings and at another under the Kings of Kanauj. But there is no doubt that it had been under the rule of Kanauj for a longer period.

After the death of Bhoja his son Mahendrapāl became King of Kanauj. At Gaya and many other places we get ample proof of many good works done by him such as the consecration of idols and other things of a similar nature (12). He had increased the extent of his dominions. The whole of Northern India from the Arabian Sea to Magadha was under his rule. We get this information from his inscriptions and from

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(11) वङ्गेरजातीयं इतिहास (रान्य-काण्ड) p. 165.

(12) बङ्गलार इतिहास Part I p. 201.

the book called *Karpūra Mañjarī* by his preceptor Rājaśekhar (13). Hence there is no doubt that Sarnath also was under his rule. The downfall of the kingdom of Kānyakubja began in the beginning of the 10th century immediately after the death of the King Mahendrapal. The Kingdom of Gāuḍa, too, began to decline about this time after the death of Devapāl. From the fall of these two powerful kingdoms the downfall of Northern India began. It was three hundred years after this time that the country was conquered by Mu'izuddin Mahammad Ghori. But the history of Northern India during these three hundred years was nothing but an account of preparation for the Mahomedan conquest.

After the death of Mahendrapāla, Bhoja II, Mahīpāl, Devapāl, Vijayapāl and some other kings ruled the country in the 10th century. But during their rule the Rāstrakuṭas and the Chāndella Kings of Jejābhukti

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(13) "वैतालिकः—जय पूर्वादिगङ्गना भुजङ्ग चम्पाचम्पककर्णपूर लीलानिर्जितराढादेश विक्रमान्त कामरूप हरिकेला केलिकारक अपमानितजात्यसुवर्णवर्ण सर्वाङ्ग सुन्दरत्वरमणीय, सुखाय ते भवतु सुरभि समारम्भः।
(संस्कृतानुवादः—कर्पूरमञ्जरी, १मजवनिकान्तर)।

(14) Vide गौडराजमाला p. 32.

rose in power and consequently the kingdom of Kāṇyakubja was shorn of its former glory and gradually dwindled away. On one or two occasions the kingdom was temporarily conquered by the Rāṣṭrakuṭas. The Kingdom of Gauḍa, too, shared the same fate. After Devapāl's death, the Rāstrakutas and the Kāmbojas invaded the country again and again and reduced it to the lowest stage of political existence. Though Sarnath had so long been under the rule of Kāṇyakubja yet the Vihāra was patronised by the Pāla Kings who followed the Tantrika form of Buddhism. But, on account of the decline of these two kingdoms in the tenth century, Sarnath also began to decline. The dilapidated condition of the Buddhist structures brought about by neglect of Vihāra and Gandhakuṭis, attracted the attention of the King Mahipāl in the 11th century. Hence, it was found necessary to take many repair works in hand. The fall of the Vihar of Sarnath was hastened by the abuses that had crept among the Buddhists not only in the 10th century but also from before that time in consequence of the introduction of Tāntrism.

We give below a short account of Tāntrism:—

Every one knows that there were two broad divi-

sions of the Buddhists, the Mahāyānists and the Hinayānists. The Hinayāna is older than the Mahayāna. The antiquarians unanimously hold that Mahayāna arose during the time of Nāgārjuna. But there is ample proof to show that it existed from before this time. (15). At the Buddhistic Council of Vaiśāli two sects were formed. These were the Sthavīravādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas. These Mahāsāṅghikas subseqeuntly became Mahāyānists. An idea about them can be formed by an examination of 'Devabhāju' and 'Gubhāju' religion of the Nepalees. (16). Sarnath was the cradle of Buddhism. Hence both the Hinayānists and the Mahāyānists held it in the greatest reverence. This is why we notice that the followers of Hinayāna such as the Sammitīyas and the Sarvāstivādins as well as the Mahāyānists lived there peacefully. The decline of Buddhism in India commenced from the 8th century. At that time Tāntrism had made some

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(15) The books of Aśvaghosh and the Lankāvatāra abound in the doctrines of the Mahāyānists.

(16) Vide Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri's article headed published in Nārāyan, Srāvana, 1322 B. S. and N. N. Basu's Modern Buddhism, Introduction p. 24.

progress among the Buddhists. (17). The Buddhists borrowed Tāntrism from the Hindus. But it being abstruse and full of mysteries they could make no advance in the way to Siddhi. On the other hand it hastened their downfall. The Mahāyānists abused the Tāntric Mantras, got morally degraded and paid attention only to the outward form of religion. The Buddhist Yogis no longer possessed the excellence of character and the purity of the heart as in the days gone by. In many cases, they had taken to performing tricks. Hence we may see the influence of Buddhistic Tantrism and the horrid picture of the Buddhistic Bhairava and the Bhairavi in Nāgānāda written in Harsha's time, Malatimadhava written in Yasovarmā's time and Karpuramanjari written in Mahendrapāla's time. In the 7th century, the Yogāchāra sect of the Mahāyānists came to be called the Mantrayānists (18) In the 9th century, the doctrines of this sect was adopted at Vikramaśila and many other places. 'Adikarmavachana' and other books of this sect were written about this time. In the 10th century a dangerous doctrine called Vajrayāna (19)

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(17) H. Kern's Manual of Buddhism p 133.

(18) Modern Buddhism p 39.

(19) The married Buddhists belonging to the middle class

arose from Kālachakrayāna (20) a subsection of Mantrayāna. This doctrine spread widely in Nepal and Tibet. (21).

In all the branches of Mahāyāna, the worship of many gods and goddesses was in vogue. They borrowed the worship of Tāntric deities from the Hindus. Tārā, Chāmuṇḍā, Vārāhī and many other goddesses were being worshipped by the Hindus from before. Mantrayāna and Vajrayāna borrowed these deities from the Purāṇas and slightly altered or added to their names. Janglitārā, Vajravārāhī, Vajratārā, Mārīchi and many other names were their peculiar innovations (22). The Hindus, too, borrowed the worship of many gods and

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followed this doctrine. A man should move from Kāmaloka to Rupaloka. Going further he reaches Arupaloka. Nirvāṇa is attained as soon as he unites himself with the goddess Niratmā.

(20). Kālachakrayāna means the 'way to escape from destruction'. Mr. Waddel explains it as Demonology. He is right. Accordiing to it even the Buddha has been described as a Piśācha. This branch of Buddhism prevails in Nepal.

(21) Grünwedel's 'Mythologie des Buddhismus,' pp. 51, 94, 100, 10 1.

22. Tārā Tantra (V. R. S.) Introduction byB. Akshay Kumar Moitra C. I. E., B. L. p. 11, 21.

goddesses from them. Muñjuśri, Akshyobhya and Avalokiteśvara were the deities of the Mahāyānists. They were worshipped during the time of the Kushanas and in the Gupta priod. In subsequent ages, the Hindus worshipped Mañjuśrī as Mañjughosha, Akshyobhya as Siva or Rishi and Baṭṭāli as Bartāli. (23). The influence of Buddhistic Tāntrism was felt in many places of India. At Sarnath, too, we may see many images of the Buddhistic Śakti type e. g. Tārā No. B (f) 2, B (f) 7, Vajratārā No. B (f) 6, Mārīchī No. B (f) 23. These images must have been made in the 9th and 10th centuries under the patronage of the Pāla Kings. Most probably, the Pāla Kings were the followers of Mantra-vajrayāna. This is proved by the statement of Tārānāth (24) as well as by the fact that they had

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23. Introduction to Modern Buddhism by M. M. Hara Prasad Śāstri, C. I. E. p. 12, and N.N. Vasu's "Archaeological Survey of Mayurvañja Vol I. Introduction p. XCV. Tārātantra Introduction p. 14.

24. "He (Taranath) adds that during the reign of the Pālā dynasty there were many masters of magic. Mantra-Vajrachāryas, who, being possessed of various Siddhis performed the most prodigious feats."
Kern's Manual of Buddhism. p. 135, Taranath 201 (quoted).

built temples at Vikramasilā, the centre of Mantrayāna. Hence, we may take it for certain that the Mantrayānists as well as the Vajrayānists existed in Dharmachakravihāra in the 9th and 10th centuries. The Pāla Kings built temples of the God Siva. They also worshipped Siva-śakti after the manner of the Buddhists. It may be noted here that at Sarnath there are relics to show both these characteristics of the Pāla kings.

Towards the close of the tenth century, the kingdom of Kāṇyakubja was dismembered and existed only in name. Again, the repeated invasions of Subaktagin and Sultan Mahmud brought it to the verge of ruin. In 1018 A.D. when Sultan Mahmud invaded Kanauj, the king Rājyapāl fled from his kingdom. But still he could not manage to save himself. Hence, the Vihar of Sarnath was in a declining condition about this time. After the conquest of Kanauj, Mahmud conquered Katehar (Rohilkhand). According to some historians, he also sacked the temples of Benares and Sarnath. (25) Mr.

(25). This much, however, is certain, that in A. D. 1026 a restoration of the main monuments of Sarnath took place, and we may perhaps connect this restoration with the capture of Benares by Mahmud of Ghazni which occurred in A. D. 1017- Sarnath Catalogue. Vogel's Introduction, p. 7.

Ramāprasād Chanda has shewn that Benares was then included in the kingdom of Gauda and was protected by a Gauda army, and that it was safe from the horrors of Mahmud's invasion.26. This view is corroborated by two additional facts. Firstly, Mahmud's invasion meant utter ruin of the place invaded. But there is no historical record to prove the devastation of Benares by him. Secondly, Mahipāl must have taken a long time to build images of Iśāna, chītraghanṭa etc. ?

These building operations must have taken place before the repair works at Sarnath *i. e.* before 1026 A.D. It is not at all probable that "कीर्तिरत्न शतानि" had been built either at the time of Mahmud's invasion or immediately after it. The Mahomedan historians also state that Benares did not come in contact with the Mahomedans before the invasion of Nialatigin *i. e.* before 1033 A. D. (27).

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26. Vide गौड़ राजमाला pp. 41 and 42 Babu Rakhal das Banerjee also is of opinion that Mahipal conquered Benares before 1020 A. D.

'The Pālas of Bengal' by R. D. Banerjee in memoirs of A. S. B. Val V. No. 3. p 7o.

27. Tankhu-s Subaktigin, Elliot's History of India, Vol. II, p 123.

It has been mentioned before that owing to very many causes the Vihar of Sarnath had been in a dilapidated condition for a very long time. The dying Buddhist community got a new life for some time when Mahipal of the Pāla Dynasty flourished towards the beginning of the Eleventh Century. During his time many Buddhist books were written and the images of many Buddhist deities were established in the country. About this time there was revival of Buddhism in Tibet It was the King Mahipal who invited Dipankara Śrijñāna or Atisha to Vikramaśilā and made him the principal Āchāryya. Hence it is no wonder that this monarch would take up the repair works of Sarnath, the cradle of Buddhism, along with those of Lumbini garden, Nālanda and other places associated with Buddhism. It is recorded in an inscription of Mahipal issued in 1026 A. D. that 'the King Mahīpāl of Gauḍa having worshipped the lotus-feet of his preceptor bearing the name of Sree Vāmarāsi repaired in 1083 Samvat 'Dharmarājikā' or 'Asokā Stupa Sāṅgadharmachakra' and constructed Aṣṭa Mahāsthāna Śaila or the Main Shrine of the Vihar through Sthirapāl and Basantapāl who had previously built for him Ishan and Chitraghanṭādi

and other sructures at Benares. (28). For this reason Babu Akshaya Kumar Maitreya calls this period 'the age of universal repairs'. It is needless to mention that an inscription to the above effect has been discovered at Sarnath.

Immediately after the completion of the repair works of Sarnath the place passed out of the rule of the Pālas and was added to the kingdom of Chedi (29). For some time both Benares and Sarnath were under the Chedi King Gāngeyadeva. It seems that this king could not make proper arrange ment for the safety of this newly conquered province which was sacked for some hours by Nialatigin, the governor of Lahore under Ma'sud the ruler of Gazni.(30). This

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28. Vide chapter VI and Appendix of this book and गौड लेख माला pp 104-109.

(29). R. D. Banerjee 'The Pālas of Bengal' (Me. A. S. B.) p 74.

(30). Both Babu Ramāprasad Chanda and Babu Nagendra Nath Basu hold that at the time of the invasion of Nialatigin Benares was under the Pālas. I fail to understand how it could be so. The Sarnath inscription of Karṇadeva goes to show that the Chedis ruled Sarnath at this time. From the boundary of the kingdom of Gāngeyadeva given by Babu Nagendranath Basu (Vide बङ्गेरजातीय इतिहास (राजन्यकान्ड p 183)

sack lasted for a very short time and only three Bazars of Benares were under the invaders for a very short time. There is no doubt that at the time of this invasion, the military operations of the Musulmans did not reach up to Sarnath. In 1040, Gāngeyadeva died and his son, Karṇadeva became King of his father's wide dominions. We learn from an inscription that in 1042 Benares was included in his territories. (31). At Sarnath also an inscription [D (1) 4] has been discovered which shows that he exercised control over this place. It bears the date 810 Kalchuri Samvat corresponding to 1058 A. D. From this inscription it is clear that the place was still called 'Saddharmachakra Vihar. The Mahāyānists had great influence there and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* the principal book of this sect, was copied at this place about this time. It is recorded in the grant given by him on the occasion of the annual Śrāddha

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it seems that Benares also was included in it. The following extract taken from the Mahomedan History shows that my view is right :—

"Unexpectedly he (Nialatigin) arrived at a city which is called Benares and which belonged to the territory of Ganga Never had a Mahomedan army reached this." Elliot Vol II p. 123.

(31). Epi. Ind Vol. II. p 300.

ceremony of his father (793 Chedi Samvat) that he had built a town called Karṇāvati and a big temple called Karnameru at Kāshi.(32). The rule of Karnadeva lasted for about six years. Hence it may be said that the Vihar of Sarnath was under him up to a little above the half of the eleventh century.

Towards the end of the eleventh century, Kirtivarmā, the Chandella king of Mahoba defeated Karnadeva and took possession of his wide kingdom and the artistic works done by him (33). Most probably Sarnath also at that time came under his rule for some time. After this, Chandradeva of the newly established Gaharwāla Dynasty of Kanauj conquered Benares, Ayodhya and other kingdoms in Northern India. (34). Benares and Sarnath continued under the rule of this Dynasty up to the end of the twelfth century.

(32. Ibid. p 188 and 305.

(33). V. A. Smith's Early History of India (2nd Ed.) p. 362. काशी परिक्रमा p. 247. 'बांगलार इतिहास pp 231, 232 बंगेर जातीय इतिहास (राजन्यकान्त) p 187.

(34) Early History of India (2nd ed. p. 355—"**Chandra deva, who established his authority certainly over Benares and Ajodhya and perhaps over the Delhi territory.

(35) For the coins of this line vide "प्राचीन मुद्रा" part I pp 214, 214,215 by R. D. Banerjee.

We have proofs of the improvements of these two places under their rule. Chandradeva's grandson Govinda Chandra was the greatest King of this line. From his innumerable inscriptions discovered at Benares and other places we learn that he did much to retrieve the lost glory of Kanauj. (35) The probable date of his reign was from 1114 A. D. to 1154 A. D. He led an expedition against Magadha. where he had to encounter Lakshmaṇa Sena. This hero defeated him and pursued him up to Prayāg. He erected various monuments of victory as well as sacrificial posts at 'the holy land of 'Viśveśvara' and the confluences of the three rivers Gangā, Jamunā and Sarasvati. (36). This occupation of Benares by Lakshmana Sen was of a very short duration. Towards the beginning of the 12th cantury, Kumāradevi, one of the queens of Govinda Chandra gave a long grant composed according to the high flown Gaud style, in Gauda on the occasion of repairing a Dharmachakrajina or an image of the Buddha belonging to the time of Dharmāsoka. Many historical facts may be gathered from his grant.

(36). राजन्यकाण्ड p. 339. ; R. D. Banerjee's "The Pālas of Bengal" pp 106-107.

It is recorded in it that Saṅkaradevi, the daughter of Mahana of the Rāṣṭrakuṭa line was given in marriage to Devarakshita, the king of Piṭhi. Kumaradevi was the daughter of Saṅkaradevi. Govindachandra, the king of Kāṇyakubja married her. (37). We learn from *Rāma pāla Charita* that Mahana was the maternal uncle of Rāma pāl of Gauḍa. He was the right-hand of the king of Gauda during the Kaivarta revolt. From the mention of a defeat of of Devarakshita at the hands of Mahana, it seems that either during the revolt alluded to above or before it, the king of Piṭhi had stood against the king of Gauda. (38). Govinda Chandra was a Hindu But the construction of a Vihāra at Sarnath, the repair of an image of the Buddha and other works of a similar nature shew that the queen Kumāradevi was favourably inclined towards Buddhism. It is recorded in the grant that the God Mahādeva had appointed Govindachandra as Hari in onder to save Benares from

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(37) Ballava Raja (of Piṭhi) मह्न (Rāsṭrakuṭa) Chandra Gāḍwal

Devaraksita + Saṅkaradevi— | Madanchandra

Kumārdevi + Govindachandra (1114—1154)

(38). बाङ्लार इविहास, Part I p. 258.

the terrible Turkish army. (31). From this it seems that even after the time of Nialatigin the Mahomedans continued to invade Benares. These invasions were led on a small scale and they have been fully dealt with in the *Gaudarājamala*. (40). Hence it appears that Govindachandra had saved Benares and Sarnath from the hands of the Mahomedans up to the middle of the 12th century. But did he ever dream what great changes would come over Benares and the whole of India within half a century ?

Every reader of History is familir with the name of Jaychānd the grandson of Govindachandra. The name of Prithviraj, his son-in-law is too well known to require any introduction. He had several times defeated Mahammad Ghori but was in the end defeated

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(39). " वाराणसीं भुवन-रक्षणदक्ष एको दुष्टान्तु (त्तु) रुष्क सुभटाद्रावितुं हरेण ॥
उक्तो हरिसस् पुनरत्र वभूव तस्माद गोविन्दचन्द्र इति (च) प्रथिताभिधानैं ॥
Kumara devi's Praśasti, Epi. Ind. Vol IX, pp. 323 ff.

(40) गौड़राजमाला p. 69. The invadors are said to have been engaged in a religious war. It is to be noted that if it were so, it was but natural to invade Benares, the centre of Hinduism.

Vide also Elliot's History of India, Vol. II pp. 223, 224.

by him 41. As a result of this defeat the rule of the Hindus came to an end. One by one all the Kingdoms of Northern India fell under the Mahomedan rule. Kutbuddin, the General of Mahammad Ghori, defeated Jayachandra in 1193 and broke the temples of Benares. It has been stated in "*Tajul-ma-Āsir*" an historical work of the Mahommedans that the Mahommedans razed to the ground 1000 temples and built mosques in their places. Thereafter, Ghori made an arrangement for the government of Benares and the adjoining places and bent his footsteps towards Gazni, 42. In "*Kamilut-tawārikh*" another historical work of the Mahomedans, the King of Benares has been described as the greatest King of India. Ghori's army defeated and killed the King of Benares and carried away enormous wealth from Benares. The ground was deluged with the blood of the Hindus and a large booty was obtained. Ghori himself came to Benares and placing the booty on the back of 14,000

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(41) While describing the valour of the Rajputs, none could transgress truth.

Lane Poole's ' Mediaeval India. p 61.

(42) Elliot's History of India, Vol II, pp. 223-224.

camels went towards Gazni,43. It may safely be said that the Buddhistic structures of Sarnath were destroyed by the Mahomedans along with the Hindu temples of Benares.44. As a result of this, the Vihār of Sarnath fell never to rise again. The contemporary history of India can give no account of this place. It seems that the Mahomedans did not know that Hinduism was different from Buddhism. This is why the name "Buddha" is not met with in any Mahomedan history.

In order to understand the mysteries of the fall of the "Dharmachakra Vihār" it is necessary to study the causes that led to the fall of the Buddhistic community in India. It has been mentioned before that with the introduction of Tāntrism among the Buddhists, the Buddhistic community began to decline. After the death of Harsha, Northern India was split up into a number of petty kingdoms and the political changes

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(43) Ibid, pp. 250-251.

(44) "It was no doubt this violent overthrow of Hindu rule in Hindusthan which brought about the final destruction and abandonment of the great convent of the "Turning of the wheel of the Law," Sarnath Catalogue, Vagel's Introduction, p. 8.

in the country affected the Buddhists along with the rest of the population. Again, this was the age in which Kumārila and Saṅkara flourished to deal a death-blow at Buddhism. They not only defeated the Buddhists in religious discourses but also established temples of the God Śiva in various places in order to revive Saivism. From that time forward Saivism and Śāktism began to rise greatly. Though the Hindu Kings now and then made grants to the Buddhists yet through their patronage Hinduism made a wonderful progress. The result of all this was that Buddhism began to decline very rapidly. The advent of the Arabs in the 8th century also helped the decline of Buddhism. The moral degradation of the Buddhists was mainly responsible for the fall of Buddhism. The Hindus gradually came to have no regard for Buddhism. The final blow was given to the rapidly declining Buddhistic community by an accident. In the twelfth century the Turkish Mahomedans poured into India like a swarm of locusts. The Hindu Kingdoms of Northern India fell before them; monasteries and temples were levelled to the ground, the country was deluged in blood and the Buddhistic community was utterly destroyed. The fall of the Hindu Kingdom did not produce the fall of

Hindu civilisation. Benares was devastated but it also rose again. But the Vihar of Sarnath and the Buddhistic community of the place fell never to rise again.

Chapter IV.

Excavation work at Sarnath.

We have seen before how the artistic works of the Buddhists at Sarnath were destroyed. The Vihar and other structures were turned into a heap of ruins, which in the course of a few years sank into the ground and there was nothing to bear testimony to the past grandeur of the place. The only structure that was able to defy the destructive influences to which the rest succumbed was the big "Dhāmeka Stupa". But the sight of this "Stupa" never suggested to any body that many ancient relics might lie hidden in the womb of earth near the place. The first excavation work in this place was not undertaken by the Archæological Department. A chronological account of the excavation work at Sārnāth is given below.

As soon as it was known that ancient relics of great historical value lay hidden under the ground at Sarnath, systematic research was set on foot. But this fact came to be known to the public by a strange accident. In 1794 A. D. Babu Jagat Sinha, the Dewan of Chait Sinha, the Raja of Benares had been building a Bazaar after

his own name. This Bazaar is still known as "Jagatganj Mahāllā". The Dewan came to know that brick and stone could be plentifully dug out at Sarnath. Accordingly he employed some men to dig the earth at this place (1). They began their work at a distance of 520 feet to the west of "Dhāmeka Stupa" and dug out a big heap of bricks and one stone vessel. Inside this vessel there was a marble vessel in which some bones, pearls, gold pots and corals were found. The contents of this vessel were thrown into the river Ganges. Of these two vessels no trace of the bigger one can now be found. It is not known whether the bones inside the marble vessel were of the Buddha or of any of his disciples. Besides these two vessels, an image of the Buddha also was found here. At the foot of this image there is an inscription of the famous Pāla King Mahipal (2). This image is now to be found at the Museum at Lucknow. A portion of it was found at Jagatganj. The land at Sarnath dug by Jagat Sinha is now called "Jagat Sinha Stupa". This ditch is very large and circular in shape.

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1. Asiatic Researches Vol. V. p. 131 Tet seq.

2. For the details of this inscription see गौड़ लेख माला by Sj. Akshaya Kumar Maitreya. C. I. E.,

An account of the discovery of this Stupa has been furnished by the writings of Mr. Jonathan Duncan, the then Commissioner of Benares. He sent the details of this excavation work to the Asiatic Society of Bengal together with the two vessels mentioned above. He also made mention of the popular view about the bones found inside the vessel. The view of one party was that a certain queen died on the funeral pyre of her husband and that the surviving members of the royal family very carefully preserved her bones. Another view was that after the cremation of the dead body of a certain man his bones were kept there for being thrown into the Ganges (3). Mr. Duncan, however, tried to prove that both these views were wrong and that the bones were of a disciple of the Buddha. In support of his own views, he made mention of the image of the Buddha dug out along with the stone vessel. Whatever may be the value of Mr. Duncan's views, there is no doubt that his finding that the "Stupa" was connected with the Buddhists greatly facilitated subsequent research works.

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3. It seems that agreeably to this view the bones were thrown into the Ganges.

4. Asiatic Researches Vol. IX. p. 203.

After the discovery of the site of Jagat Singh's "Stupa" many research scholars felt the necessity of excavation work at Sarnath. Colonel C. Mackenzie was the first man to begin this work in 1815 A. D. (5). Miss Emma Roberts, an English lady, has mentioned that certain English men of Sikrol out of curiosity dug the earth at Sarnath and found some images of the Buddha there (6). The second man to undertake excavation work at Sarnath was Alexander Cunningham, the first Director-General of the Archaeological Department. He carried on his research work in almost all places of antiquarian interest in India and made the task of subsequent scholars comparatively easy. He was not satisfied with the results of the excavation work at Sarnath and said that such work was not necessary there (7). In the year 1835–36, he began examining the three principal "Stupas" of the place. While engaged in excavating "Dhāmeka Stupa" he got a tablet of stone bearing the inscription "ये धर्म्मेहेतु प्रभवा etc." This tablet has been preserved in the Indian Museum in Calcutta. The most noteworthy portions of his report on "Dhameka Stupa" have been quoted in

5. Archaeological Survey Reports, 1903-4, p.212.

6. R. Elliot, 'Views in India' etc. Vol. II. pp.7 f.

7. Archaeological Survey Reports, Vol. I. p. 129.

Mr. Sherring's book on Benares. Next, he examined "Jagat Singh Stupa" and ascertained the real site of the ancient Buddhistic relics. His research work in connection with "Chaukhandī Stupa" was not crowned with much success. He found 50 or 60 stone figures by the side of the ruins of a temple near the village of Vārāhīpur in the neighbourhood of Sarnath. He was of opinion that these figures were kept in a neighbouring temple and that subsequently when the persecution of men professing a different faith began they were concealed in this place. Dr. Vogel considered this view to be reasonable. Noticing that some of these figures bear Gupta inscriptions, he came to the conclusions that they were concealed at the time of the Huna invasion (8). We are inclined to think that all the Hindu idols of Sarnath were in this manner removed from this place. This matter will be fully discussed in the next chapter. These images were presented by Mr. Cunningham to the Asiatic Society of Bengal and are now in the Indian Museum. Scenes from the life of the Buddha, his figure seated on the lotus-seat in the posture known as "Bhūmisparsha Mudrā", the figures of Avalokitesvara

8. Sarnath Catalogue p. 112.

and Tārā are engraved on these stones. The remaining figures were thrown into the river Barunā for checking its current at the time of costructing a bridge over it. On another occasion, also, blocks of stone were taken from Sarnath for building the foundation of the bridge over the Barunā. Mr. Sherring has given a detailed account of these things in his book called "The Sacred City of the Hindus."

Twelve years after Cunningham's time, the engineer and archaeologist Mr. Kittoe discovered a number of "stupas" and foundations of temples and the site of two Vihāras in the place round "Dhāmek Stupa" and "Jagat Singh Stupa". But it is a matter of regret that he died a premature death before the results of his research could be published. The letter he wrote to Mr. Cunningham is the only source from which an account of his research work may be had. In this letter he wrote that his excavation work and researches at Sarnath had convinced him that the Migadāva Vihar had been destroyed by fire. While carrying on his research work at Sarnath he was also engaged, as Engineer, in supervising the construction of the building of the Queen's College at Benares. In the construction of this structure, he largely used the blocks of stone found at Sarnath. The

present writer had, some years ago, an opportunity of discovering a satisfactory proof of this. Two ancient letters of the Gupta period have been found engraved on a block of stone at the south-eastern corner of the Queen's College Buildings. My late Professor Dr. Venis also examined these letters and supported my views. The other figures discovered by Mr. Kittoe are in the museum of Lucknow.

After Mr. Kittoe Mr. Thomas, Professor Fitz Edward Hall of the Queen's College and then Mr. Horn and Rivett Carnack took up the work of excavation at Sarnath (9). But nothing worthy of note seems to have been done by them. The figures discovered by them had been kept for a long time in the compound of the Queen's College. Now they have been removed to the Sarnath Museum.

Again, for a long time the attention of the people was not drawn towards Sarnath. Of the relics mentioned above those that were fit for removal were removed either to Calcutta or the museum at Lucknow. The rest were gradually decaying in the plains of Sarnath. Such was the condition of Sarnath up to the year 1904. About this time a strange event took place which led

(9) A. S. R. Vol. p, 125.

to the restoration of excavation work at Sarnath. When a road connecting this place with Ghazipur Road was under construction, a figure of the Buddha was dug out of the earth (10). This discovery inspired the archaeologists with the hope that the ancient relics of Sarnath had not been exhausted. With the sanction of the Government the enthusiastic antiquarian Mr. Oertel began his excavation work in the winter of 1904-5 with the help of the Archaeological Department. The Archaeological Department made a proposal to the Government that the relics dug out should be preserved in the local museum. At first the Government sanctioned only Rs. 500/- towards the cost of this excavation work. But as its results were highly satisfactory, a further grant of Rs. 1000/- was subsequently made.

The excavation of Oertel ushered in a new era in the annals of the research work of Sarnath. The world is indebted to him for the wonderful discoveries made by him at this place. He was the first scholar to carry on the work of excavation systematically and on a scientific basis. As the result of his work, 476 architectural and sculptural relics and 41 inscriptions were

(10) Sarnath Catalogue p. 14.

discovered in one season. In the course of this excavation, the place where the Buddha had preached his religion for the first time was discovered. A list of the important discoveries made by Mr. Oertel is given below:—

1. The Main Shrine.

2. The figure of Bodhisattva belonging to the time of the Kushan Emperor Kaniṣka, a stone umbrella and the inscription on the Lion-pillar.

3. Asoka's pillar bearing his inscriptions, a capital and a portion of a pillar.

4. The foundation of a large Saṅghārām, and an inscription of the King Aśvaghosha.

5. The figures of many Buddhistic and Hindu deities (11).

" An area of about 200 sq feet. has been excavated under the supervision of Mr. Oertel. This place stands to the north of Jagatsingh's stupa. The foundation of the above mentioned shrine has been discovered at the place which has been shewn by Mr. Cunningham in his map as the site of the "stupa" described by Mr. Kittoc Besides this, the foundation of the "Chaukhandi stupa"

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(11) "Buddhist ruins of Sarnath," by Oertel.

as mentioned above has been discovered at a distance of 200 feet to the north of Jagat Singh's stupa. It is of the same size as the shrine discovered by Mr. Cunningham. It is 95 feet in length as well as in breadth. Its principal door faces the east, There is a flight of three steps leading to the door. In this place, there are some quadrangular stone-tablets on which are engraved the figure of the Buddha, the Dharmachakra or the Wheel of Law, some deer and worshippers and some Chaityas and similar things. The principal door leads to the yard, which measures 39 feet by 23 feet. On either side of this yard, there is a chamber. To the west of the yard, there is an elevated ground on which there are two stone pillars about seven feet in height. To the west of this place there is the foundation of the innerchamber of the shrine. In the middle of the foundation between two stone pillars there is the seat of the idol that was inside the shrine. It looks some thing like a niche. On all sides of it there is space for moving round. The space is very narrow, its breadth in some places being only one foot and a half. To the west of these two pillars there is a chamber four feet broad. To the west of this chamber there is a smaller chamber which cannot he reached through

the principal door. On the three other sides of the shrine there are three doors. The two chambers on either side of the yard can be entered into through the gates to the north and the south respectively. The door to the west leads into the smaller chamber mentioned above. The pillars inside the shrine are 17 feet apart. The chamber to the west of it, is 28 feet long. The chambers adjacent to the three other doors are comparatively small and are nearly of equal dimension. The chamber to the north is 7 feet long. The western and southern chambers are respectively 10½ feet and 8½ feet in length. A space of about 50 feet to the east of the shrine has been cleared. In this place, a yard made of small pieces of stone may still be seen. A portion of the eastern wall of the shrine as well as its foundation is made of stone. Excepting this portion and the four pillars mentioned above the shrine is built of long-shaped brick. But here and there sculptured stones have been used. A critical examination into these blocks of stone shows that they were not originaly meant for this shrine.

In some of the blocks the figures of the Buddha have been engraved. Here and there, there have been engraved some swans arranged in a line and some lotus

flowers. Bestdes these the remains of chaityas built of small blocks of stone were used in the construction. To the East of the shrine there is a headless figure of the Buddha in the posture known as Bhumisparsamudra. This is about four feet in height. Behind it there are engraved six Chaityas in three lines. There are also engravings at the foot of it showing the mouth of a lion at a window on one side of which there are the figures of a woman and a boy both represented with folded hands and in a kneeling posture. On the other side of the window, there is the figure of a woman in dancing posture. There is an inscription above this scene from which we learn that this figure was the gift of the sthavira Bandhugupta. No other thing worth mentioning has been discovered in the east of the shrine. In the chamber to the south of the yard a headless figure of the Buddha may still be seen. The wall of this part of the shrine is higher than those of the other parts. The wall on each side of the southern door is still 12 feet high. At the bottom of the western wall of this chamber, a very old 'stupa' has been discovered. The foundation of this 'stupa' is foursided and is made of brick. On all sides of it, there is a stone-railing like the stone-railing of

Sanchi and Bharhut. This railing is square-shaped and each side of it is 8½ feet in length. It is now in a broken condition. It also bears two or three letters inscribed on it. But these are illegible. The northern part of this stupa is round. On it there is a massive wall 10 feet high and 21 feet broad. It has been known at the time of the excavation work that when this wall was built the stupa and the railing were very carefully covered with brick. The builder might easily break them; but he used every possible care to preserve them. It seems that the stupa was then regarded as holy and that therefore it was preserved either out of divine fear or social fear. Some mounds of brick built one upon the other were preserved at the time of the excavation. There is a foundation 45 feet long to the south east of the shrine. It forms the eastern boundary of the area excavated. To the south of it there is the foundation of two small shrines. Further from this, there are the foundations of some middle sized stupas. These are all brick-built. To the west of this place there are of four brick built "stupas" constructed one upon the other. To the west of this, there is the foundation of two small shrines. In one of them a tablet of stone bearing an inscription in "Kuṭila" character was found.

The letters have been badly effaced ; therefore it is not possible to decipher them. The space to the west of this, up to the western boundary of the area excavated is full of stupas and foundations of stupas. To the immediate south of the four stupas mentioned above a figure of the Budhisattva, a stone-umbrella and a stone pillar all belonging to the time of Kaniṣka were found. The umbrella broke into pieces. The stone-figure and the stone pillar were each divided into three parts.

The inscription of two lines at the foot of the figure of the Bodhisattva and that of four lines in the 5th part are similar to the first four lines inscribed on the pillar. From the existence of inscriptions on the back of the figures, Dr. Vogel infers that the idols in those days were not placed close to the walls of the shrines as they are now (12). The whole area between the shrine and the 'Jagat Singh Stupa' has been excavated. Stupas of different sizes, made of stone as well as brick, have been discovered in this place. At the time of the excavation of the surroundings of 'Jagat Sing Stupa', a brick-built path for circumbulating the Stupa was discovered. General Cunningham has in his map shewn the position of four mounds of earth round "Jagat Singh Stupa".

Of these only the southern one stands to this day, the rest having been removed at the time of excavation. To the west of this mound. Mr. Oertel built a Stupa in imitation of the ancient ones. It rests on an old foundtion. On its side, there is a block of stone with the figures '1904 A. D.' inscribed on it. This forms the southern boundary of the area excavated. A number of ancient relics has been dug out from the ground lying to the west of the Shrine. In front of the western door and at a distance of 10 cubits to the west of it, a stone-pillar bearing the inscription of Asoka, the Great, has been discovered. Besides that of Asoka it bears two other inscriptions. In one of them there is mention of the 10th day of the first fort-night in the dewy season of the 34th year of the King Aśvaghosha. The other inscription relates to a grant. The script of both these inscriptions is of comparatively later date. The pillar is to be found in a ditch 10 cubits deep. The first three lines of the inscription of Aśoka have been effaced. The pillar is now broken. Like other pillars of Aśoka it has the figures of four lions at the top of it. On these lions there was a Dharma-Chakra or the Wheel of Law. A number of yards were discovered at the time of the excavation of

the surroundings of the pillar. A yard of the time of Asoka has been discovered 10 feet under the surface of the earth. The portion of the pillar below this level is without polish; but the portion above it is nicely polished and is as smooth as a mirror. There was a stone-railing round the pillar on the yard of the time of Aśoka. Five feet above it there is one path paved with red blocks of stone resembling those used at Muttra. Three feet above it there is a yard made of stone tiles of unequal size and above all is the existing one made of small pieces of stone' (13).

The excavation work at Sarnath was suspended for some days on account of the transfer of Mr. Oertel to Agra. In 1907, Sir Dr. J. H. Marshall, the Director General of the Archaeological Department, personally undertook the work of excavation with the help of Dr. Sten konow.

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(12) Annual Progress Report of the Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of the United Provinces & the Punjab, 1905, p 57,

(13) English rendering of an extract from Babu Rakhaldas Banerjee's article entitled 'Bauddha Bārānasi' published in the Sahityā Parishad Patrika, 1313, B. S., p. 163.

Nicholas, Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni and the late Bipin Chakravarti. This time the work of excavation was carried on over a greater area than on previous occasions. This marked the beginning of an attempt to ascertain the relative site of the ancient relics of Sarnath and their geographical position. The area of excavation now lay to the north, the southern portion having been ransacked long ago. The number of images found in the north is less than those found in the south; but still the former are more valuable for many reasons. As a result of the excavation of 1907, 244 images and 25 inscriptions on stone-tablets were discovered. A detailed account of these things will be given in the proper place. Of these relics, a figure of the Buddha [B (6) 173] the gift of Kumar Gupta II which was found in the land to the south of 'Jagat Singh Stupa', another figure of the Buddha made according to the Gandhar style of sculpture [B (6) 179] which was a gift of Dhanadeva and which was found in the land to the north-east of the main shrine and an inscription of the 2nd century deserve mention. All the ancient relics discovered at Sarnath after the time of Oertel are the results of the research work carried on only by Mr. Marshall.

Encouraged by the success of his first endeavours, he again undertook work in 1908 with the help of Mr. Sten konow. This time also the land lying to the north was excavated. He discovered certain houses to the north of 'Dhamek-stupa'. According to him, the date of these houses lay between the 5th and the 8th century of the Christian Era. He also excavated the land on all sides of 'Jagat Singh Stupa' and got evidence of the fact that it had been repaired seven times. This time a number of Buddhistic and Hindu deities as well as 23 inscriptions were discovered. Besides these plenty of bricks, earthen seals, garlands made of earth and parts of doors were dug out. Of allt he finds, a 12-feet high figure of the Mahadeva having ten hands [B.N.(1)], a wonderful earthen head of the 1st century B. C. (14), a tablet of stone on which 'Kshāntivādi jātaka' is represented, and the inscriptions of Viśvapāla and Kumara Devi are worthy of mention. A detailed account of them will be given in the next chapter.

After the time of Marshall no further excavation work was done at Sarnath for six years. The result of the work done in this place had all along been beyond expectation. Hence, there is probably no justification

14. Annual Report 1907-1908, fig. 8.

for the Archaeological Department having suspended the work of excavation for such a long period. Lay men may, of course, err in the selection of proper places to carry on excavation work. In 1915, Mr. Hargreaves of the Archaeological Department carried on excavation work at Sarnath for a short time. He discovered three valuable figures. At the foot of these figures there are inscriptions relating to grants from which the date of Kumargupta II and some other things of historical interest may be known. Last year i. e. in 1922 and the year preceding, Rai Dayārām Sahni busied himself with the excavation to the eastern grounds of the Main Shrine and was fortunate in bringing to light three beautiful relic *chaityas* almost near the Dhāmekh and a Terra-Cota stupa with ornamental sides and some images of the Buddhists and the Hindus.

Chapter V.

Iconography.

The renowned historian Dr. V. A. Smith, from an observation of the articles discovered at Sarnath comes to the conclusion that " the history of Indian sculpture from Asoka to the Mahommedan conquest might also illustrated with fair completeness from the finds of Sarnath alone."(1) As a matter of fact the collection of ancient relics at Sarnath serves as an ideal school to the rasearch scholar. Here, one may see excellent examples of the various styles of art of ancient India. If the students of the 'Neo-Painting' in India do not give loose rein to their imagination and study the style of art here they may avoid being laughed at by others for their erroneous notion regarding artistic models of ancient India. In these days of research it is quite clear that imagination is of no avail to give one an accurate idea of these things. But the new generation of artists are averse to taking suggestions which go to them in vain.

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(1) V. A. Smith's *"A History of fine Art in India and Ceylon"* p. 148.

The finds at Sarnath are also valuable from an iconographic point of view. From the images and other relics of sculpture at this place, we may know what idols were worshipped by the different sects of India in different ages as well as the changes made in this respect in one sect by the influence of another sect. Buddhistic, Hindu and Jain idols by their strange association with one another have given rise to a number of new theories. These await the final verdict at the hands of experts. From the relics of sculpture found at Sarnath many new things about the Indian Mythology have come to light. Scenes from the Buddhistic Jātaka stories have been engraved on many of the stone-tablets. (1). These finds are also highly valuable from a historical and antiquarian point of view. From the peculiarity of some of the figures the dates of the inscriptions attached to them have been ascertained. From the nature of the stone used in some of the statues, it has been ascertained that the artists living in various parts of ancient India largely borrowed from one another. An inscription found at this place has removed the erroneous idea that prior to the time of Asoka

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(1) *Kṣānti-Vādi Jātaka.*

no images were made in India. From the style of some of the Stupas it has been ascertained that the architects who worked here had had a connexion with the architects of Ceylon. Hence, the museum and the relics of Sarnath are very valuable to the historian as well as to the antiquarian. Indeed, the museum is as essential to the antiquarian or the historian as a laboratory to a student of Science. But it is a matter of deep regret that the people of this country have not as yet been convinced of this plain truth. This is why some artists have passed caustic remarks on the utility of any museum. In Europe, one's education is not complete unles he has visited museums and travelled in foreign countries. Though we are fond of imitating the Europeans in every thing yet we are much behind them in this respect. But a change seems to have come over the people of this country and here and there museums are being established through the efforts of the natives. But the Science of Iconography has not as yet achieved any appreciable development. I shall regard my pains well-requited if from the perusal of these pages any reader is inspired with a zeal for studying the finds of this museum. A chronological account of the articles discovered at

Sarnath and the relics collected at the museum of the place is thus given below.

The Lion-pillar of Asoka is the best and the most ancient of all the relics that have been discovered at Sarnath up to this date. Nine monolithic pillars of Asoka had previously been discovered at various places in India. Native as well as foreign art-critics were very loud is praising their beauty and workmanship. (1). But after the discovery of this pillar, it has been pronouced to be the best of its kind. At the top of it, there stand the figures of four full-grown lions. The eye balls of these lions were made of precious stones. But though these have been taken away yet there is enough evidence to show that they existed at one time. These figures are so life-like and their make is so natural that who ever sees them cannot but praise the maker. At the

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(3) "The detached monolithic pillars erected by Asoka bear testimony to the perfection attained by the early stone cutters of India in the exercise of their craft". V. A. Smith in the Imperial gazetteer of India Vol II, p 109.

The Lāmā Tārānath also has highly praised the making of Chaitya and Vajrāsana by the Yaksha architects of Asoka's time. Indian Antiquary Vol. IV, 102.

feet of the lions there are four wheels. Between each pair of wheels there are the figures of an elephant, a full, a horse and a lion. The wheels seem to symbolise Buddhism. Elephant is the vehicle of the god Indra, the bull of Siva, the horse of the Sun-god, and the lion of the goddess Durgā. Here, it is to be noticed that each of these has been represented as moving. The whole thing perhaps symbolises that Buddhism will last so long as these animals will live in this planet. We also cannot reject the view of Dr Bloch like Pandit Dayārām Sahāni. Below these figures there is a portion of the pillar shaped like a bell. The portion below this is all of one piece with the pillar. This entire capital has been kept in the main hall of the museum. The pillar is at the place where it was dug out. The pillar as well as its capital is made of sandstone. A wonderfully shining polish called "Vajra-lepa" is found on the surface of the pillar (2). The gloss, smoothness and colour of the Vajralepa are simply admirable. We are in an ecstasy of pride

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(4) Babu AkshayaKumar Maitreya C.I.E., says that the Tantras contain rules for the construction of this "lepa". The matter has been discussed at some length in the Bengali magazines.

to think of India's development in material Sciences at such an early date. (5). At the top of this pillar there was a big wheel of Law, the principal symbol of Sarnath. It is now in broken condition and has been kept in a glass case in the museum of Sarnath.

This pillar bears three inscriptions. A detailed account of these inscriptions as well as others will be given in the next chapter.

Besides this pillar, no other relic of the Mauryya age has been discovered at Sarnath. But we learn from the inscription of Kumardevi that she had repaired the "Sri Dharmachakrajina" or the image of the Buddha made at the time of the king Asoka. (6).

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(5) V.A. Smith describes the Asoks pillars as "imitations of the Persian columns of the Achaemanian period with menestic ornament." But such views of the Europeans seem no longer tenable. Mr. Havell has recently refuted the views of Greek influence over the arts of India. From an examination of an image in the Peshwar museum (Sculpture No 241) and many other images found in the country it may be proved that unlike the Greeks the Indian image-makers had no liking for giving muscles. The image mentioned above has a big belly and it is purely Indian. The greeks never made images with pot bellies cf. Sohrmann's 'Die Altindische Saule' (old Indian Halls).

From this inscription a new truth has come to light. Some European archaeologists held before this and some still maintain that no images of the Buddha or any other deity were constructed prior to the time of the Mahāyānists. Unless we charge Kumaradevi with lying it must be admitted that the Indians of Asoka's time knew how to make images of their gods and goddesses. No wise man can bring himself to believe that the people who could make the lions on the pillars of Asoka and other things of exquisite workmanship such as at Sanchi knew not how to make an image of the Buddha. We cannot but reject such views of the Europeans as they are unsupported by reason.

Another relic of the Maurya age is a stone railing a description of which has been given before. It was discovered in a brick-built chamber round a small stupa. Its striking feature is that it is made of a single piece of sandstone. Its polish and make is as fine as that of the railings at Sanchi and Barhut. It also has cross-bars like those at the above places. (7). Thereon also may be seen

(6) Epigraphia Indica Vol p 325 also A.S.R. 1907.8. p 79
धर्म्माशोक नराधिपस्य समये श्रीधर्म्मचक्रो जिनो
यादृक् तन्नयरक्षितः पुनरयश्चक्रे ततोऽप्यद्भुतम्
वीहारः स्थविरस्य तस्य च तया यत्नादयङ्कारितः ।
तस्मिन्नेव समर्पितश्च वसतादाचन्द्रचण्डद्युति ।

small inscriptions giving the names of the subscribers. From an inscription incised in the Brahmi script we learn that it was the gift of a nun of the name of Sabahikā.

This gift of railing and cross-bars will not appear new to those who had had any opportunity of having a look at the relics of the Buddhistic age at Muttra and other places. Here, it may be said that this railing was the oldest of all the railings of ancient India. It was made during the reign of Asoka for the protection of the Asokan pillar. No other railing has as yet been proved to have been made during the time of Asoka.

An ornamental Capital belonging to the Sunga age that followed the Mauryya age has attracted the special attention of the foreigners. This Capital (No.D.9. 4.) was found in the north-western corner of the Main-shrine. It is flat and is engraved on both sides. On one side of it, a rider has been shewn driving his horse very fast. The gesture of the horse, the inclination of the rider and the expression of his face are its special features. The figures have been incised according to the style of art prevailing in ancient India and still the whole thing is as natural as possible. On the other side, two men have been represented as riding an elephant. The driver is driving the

elephant with his hook slightly leaning in front of him. Behind him a man sits holding a flag in his hand. How the elephant walks raising his head and trunk when he is first hit with the hook, what is the gesture of the riders at that time, how the flag streams at that time, all these have been very skilfully represented. Besides this capital, some railing posts of this age deserve mention. These (No. D. 1—12) were found by Sir John Marshall in the area to the north-east of the Main shrine. Buddhistic symbols and a variety of artistic designs have been incised on almost all of them. Some of them bear the Bodhi tree decorated with garlands of flower and the trident symbolising the three gems and some the wheel and the umbrella. The representation on the pillar No. D. (a) 6 is interesting from very many points of view. Figures of half men and half-demons, the ear of the elephant, the tail of the fish, flowers, lion's head, all these are the special features of these pillars. On the whole, the engravings on all the pillars bear testmony to refined taste and natural representation. None of them weary the eye or make it blind to beauty.

(7) Vide Anderson's Archaeological Catalogue part I. Indian Museum p. 9.

Another relic of the Sunga age is a man's head made of stone (No B 1). It is broken into two parts. The right ear on this head is broken. The left ear is intact. According to the fashion of the locality there is a tuft of hair made into a braid on the crown of the head. The remaining portion of the head is without hair. It was found by Mr. Oertel near the main shrine.

The Sunga age was followed by the Kushan age. Some relics of this age, too, have been discovered at Sarnath. All of them are Buddhistic images. The foreign antiquarians have described the biggest of them as the best image of Sarnath in the face of the statement of Kumaradevi embodied in her inscription. The train of their argument on this point is as follows :—The oldest images of the Buddha were made by the Bactrian sculptors of Gandhara. Thence they were taken to Muttra and from this place to the various centres of Buddhism in India. As this image of Badhisattva is made of red-stone of Muttra and as at Muttra there is a similar image (8) of Bhikshu Bala who made a gift of this image, an older one there cannot be at Sarnath.

We, however, cannot accept the above view as correct. None of the antiquarians has as yet proved that any of the images found at Gāndhāra or Peshwar is

older than this image. The inscription on it proves that it was made in the third year of the reign of Kaniska. We shall give an account of this inscription in the next chapter. This image is about 9 feet 5 inches in height. One of its hands is broken. It seems that it was raised according to the rules of *Abhayamudrā*. On the palm, a wheel has been engraved and there are marks of *svastika* on the fingers. These are the signs of a great personage. As it is the image of Bodhisattva these signs may be indicative of his partial Buddhahood. Its left hand is slightly curved and is placed on the middle of the body. It is represented as wearing a very fine undergarment.

The folds of this garment show how careful the sculptor must have been to preserve the naturalism of the image. The Europeons believe that only the Greeks could construct such images. There is no help if inspite of overwhelming proof to the contrary, they stubbornly cling to their views. On the waist of the image there is a bell which lightly holds the dress worn in the lower part of the body. Between the two legs there is the image of a lion. Dr. Vogel is of opinion that it is a symbol Sākysiṃha, a name of the Buddha. But we fail to understand how there can be an image of Sākyasiṃha at the foot of that of Bodhisattva. It seems to us that it

was placed there for the same reason for which an image of the lion had been placed among the figures of the four beasts on the top of the Asoka pillar. It also may be the symbol of the *Mahāyāneyas* of the Buddhists. There was a very big umbrella over this image. It is now broken. Its fragments, ten in number have been collected together and kept in the museum. On the middle of the umbrella a lotus has been incised. Around this lotus there are some circles. In each circle there have been incised figures of some animals, the three gems, a couple of fishes, a conch, svastika and many other cognate things. The inscription on the bar which supported this umbrella will be discussed hereafter.

Another image of the Kushan age also deserves mention here. It is an image [No. B (a)3] of Bodhisattva in a standing posture. Together with its pedestal it is about 10 feet and a half in height. Its head is broken. Its right hand is placed in the same position as that of Fig No B (a) 1. Its left hand does not rest on the waist, but hangs along the thigh. In this image we notice the gradual disappearance of the practice of sculpturing dresses. Because eversince the beginning of the Gupta age the practice of giving elaborate dresses in images had been going out of fashion. The small figure

between the legs of this image seams to be similar to that of the lion in image No B (a) 1. On both sides of it there are two figures in a bending posture. They seem to be the figures of the donors of this image. It seems that there was a halo round its head. Its legs bear testimony to the fact that it had a red coating over it. This image was discovered by Mr. Oertel in the south east of the main shrine along with a stupa of the middle ages. It had a stone umbrella over it. This umbrella has not as yet been discovered. Its handle was found near the main shrine.

Besides this image, another thing, a broken part of a halo (No B (a) 4) has been held to belong to the Kushan age. A peepal tree has been incised in front of it. From this it appears that the image of which it forms a part was that of Gautama representing him seated under the Bodhi tree after the attainment of Buddhahood. This image has not as yet been discovered. From the red colour of the stone of which this halo is made Mr. Sahani holds that it was made by the sculptors of Muttra.

Many other relics of the Kushan age may be seen in the museum at Sarnath. We donot consider it necessary to give a detailed account of them.

The Gupta age was the Golden age in the Iconography of Sarnath. The images of this age collected at Sarnath are most numerous and their size and make show endless variety and exquisite workmanship. The images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva of this age exhibit the different *Mudrās* and *āsanas*. The various signs of the Bodhisattva have been shewn in its images. A number of images belonging to the same type have been collected at the museum. Here we shall give an account of the most important of them selecting some for their peculiarities and others as representing the various types of sculpture. The Buddhistic images of the Gupta age are of great value from an artistic point of view. Some of the Buddha statues of this period, says Dr. Vogel, by their wonderful expression and calm repose and mild serenity give a beautiful rendering of the Buddhistic idea. (9). Though in these images we notice complexity in place of the simplicity of the Kuśhan age still they are valuable to an artist. The representation of leaves and creepers and other ornamental articles of decortion never gives proof of rusticity. On the contrary, these things show a refinement of taste. The images of this age are

9. Sarnath Catalogue p 19.

smaller than those of the Kushan age, and are more natural and expressive of loftier ideas. Their faces never seem to be of the Mongolian type as of those of the Kushan age. (10). Pauranic Buddhism attained its culminating point in the Gupta age. The images of this age bear traces of this fact. In this age the worship of the Bodhisattva attained the highest development. This is why thre are varicus images of Avalokitesvara at Sarnath. We give below an account of the most important images at Sarnath :—No. B (b) 1 :— The image of the Buddha in standing posture :—

Its legs and left hand are broken. Of the three *chibaras* the peculiar dress of a Bhikshu, there is '*Antara vasaka*' (12) in the lower part and *saṁghati* in the upper part. The lower garment is held fast by means of a belt. Its right hand is uplifted and this shows

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10. The tachis originally came from Mongolia. Kushans were but a branch of the Ynehchi.

11. According to *Vinayapitaka* the Bhikshus had to wear three *chibaras* viz *Samghāti*, *Uttarāsanga* and *Antaravāsaka* In Northern India this dress is called Kāshāya. On account of its colour. The word '*trichivara*' is not a technical word of *Vinayapitaka*.

12. Antara vāsaka—undergarment.

that it stands in the posture "Abhaya Mudra" Its wavy hair is turned towards the right. There is no sign of *Urṇā* on its head A halo behind its head indicates that it belongs to the Gupta period. At the end of its halo there are crescent-shaped sculptural designs. There is a similar image of the Buddha in the museum of Calcutta. In describing it Mr. Anderson has written '*Āshiva Mudrā* instead of *Abhayamudrā*. (14).

B (b) 23 No :—A standing image of the Buddha without the head and the right hand. Its left hand is placed in the *Varadamudrā*. There is a small figure at the foot of this image. It may be the figure of the donor of the image.

B (b) 172—The image of the Buddha seated in—*Bhūmisparśa Mudrā*. In Buddhistic sculpture, this Mudrā symbolises the Buddha's conquest over Māra and his attainment of *Sambodhi* at Gayā. As it is mostly broken, its sculptural beauty can hardly be appreciated. From its photo by Major Kittoe it seems that it was intact when it was found by him. Its pedestal is like the

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13. Saṅghāṭi = a dress wrapped twice.

14. Anderson, Catalogue and hand-book of archæological collections in the Indian Museum Part II, p. VI, No S. 14.

Bodhimanda. The seat on it is held up by two dwarfish figures. In the dress of the Buddha there are both *Antara vāsaka* and *Sanghāṭi* in their proper places. There is also a halo round the head of the image. At the top leaves of the Bodhi tree have been beautifully incised. On the right side of the Buddha, there stands Māra holding the bow and the arrow in his hands. A daughter of Māra stands on the left side. On all sides of the image there are figures of the followers of Māra represented as being ready to kill the Buddha. Below the right hand of the Buddha there is the bust of a woman. It is the image of Vasundharā (Earth) She has appeared before the Buddha seeing his superhuman power 15. In the middle of the pedestal there is the figure of a woman represented as running away with dishevelled hair. She is daughter of Māra. She is flying away at the sight of the victory of the Buddha.

B (b) 173—This is almost similar to the image described above. It differs from that alone in some

15. When the Buddha was go ng to have 'Samyaka Sambodhi' Māra said to him "Who will bear witness to your attainment of Saṁbodhi?" "The Earth" said the Buddha touching the ground. At once the Earth appeared before him. This mudra has been called the "Sākshīmudrā" in later Buddhistic literature.

minor details. In its pedestal there is the figure of a lion which symbolises the Uruvilva forest, the place of the attainment of *Sambodhi.* On the left side there are the figures of Māra and his daughter. On the foot of the Buddha there are two chakras which are signs of a great man. On the pedestal of it, there is the following inscription of Kumāra Gupta II.

"दे (य) धर्म्मोऽयं कुमार गुप्तस्य"

B (b) 181—The figure of the Buddha sitting in the *Dharma Cakra* posture. It may be said to be the best of all the images of the Gupta age in Saraath. It was the first of all the foremost finds of Mr. Oertel. It is exceptionaly valuable to both the artists and the historian from many points of view. It is an eloquent testimony to the fact that Sarnath was the place, where the Buddha set the wheel of Law in motion. According to some scholars, prior to the Buddhist image-worship wheel was the only symbol of "Dharmachakra pravartana". We are inclined to hold that such images were first made at Sarnath where Buddhism was preached for the first time. The representation of the deer and the Pancha-vargiya Bhikshus in these images proves the ancient age of Sarnath. The Dharmachakra mudra came into being only after

the making of such images had come into fashion. This mudra was not unknown even in far off Gāndhāra. Dr. Vogel is of opinion that the Mudrā of Gāndhāra had no similarity with that of Sarnath but was like that of Srâvasti. 16. We are unable to accept the view of Dr. Vogel as correct. The number of the images of the Buddha in the act of turning the wheel of Law in motion that have been found in Gāndhāra is very large 18. None has as yet proved that the image at Sarnath was made after the model of those found in Gāndhāra. On the other hand, Dr. Spooner has shown that the latter bear the deer and other things so peculiar to the former. 19. Hence it is evident that the images of this type were first made at Sarnath. There is evidence to show that such images were also made in Bengal 20. This image was and still is the

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16. Sarnath Catalogne p. 20.

18. Peshawar Museum Sculptures No 129, 145, 349, 455, 760, 762, 767, 773, 780, 1250, 1252.

19. Hand-book to the Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum, by Dr. D. B. Spooner Ph. D. (1910).

20. Descriptive List of Sculptures in the Muscum of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, By R. D. Banerjee M. A. p. 17, Sculpture No. 230.

typical of its kind. It is 5 feet and 3 inches in height. All its members are intact. Both its hands are placed near the chest. Its legs are placed in "Yogāsana". It is represented as wearing a very fine cloth. The hair on the head is turned towards the right side. We think that the eyes are fixed on the ground as in meditation. The entire image sits over beautifully sculptured lotus. In the middle of the pedestal there is the wheel in motion. On both sides of it there are two deer recumbent. On both sides there are seven human figures kneeling down side by side. Among these are the Panchavargiya Rishis with shaven heads. The remaining two may be the figures of the donors of the image. There is a beautifully decorated aureole behind its head. Above the halo and on both sides of it there are two divine figures flying on their wings. There is

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21. We are of opinion that from the evolution of this Sculptural Buddhist aureoles the painted crescent background of the Durga image of Bengal has originated. The carved background of the Buddha figure in question and its halo closely resemble the *chal* or background of Durga image. The so-called "Surya-mukhi" 'chal' is circular and may be easily mistaken for an aureole. Formerly, it appears probable that the object of giving a 'chal' was only to represent a halo.

no figure in the middle of the halo. Below it on both sides of the Buddha there are two dragons shaped like lions. Those who say that dragons were unknown in ancient India should carefully note these two figures. The make of this image is so very nice and natural that it may be said to be the model production of the Sarnath, The ornamental work in the halo is devoid of multiplicity of lines but it is still very artistic. The figures of the dragons are indicative of heroism. No figure of the dragon in Europe is better fashioned than these. The posture of the image of the Buddha is so natural that when any one sees it he is led to believe that he has before him an excellent photo of a living being. Even the glands of the throat have been beautifully shown. The expression of the face is so calm and so profound that it is beyond the power of language to describe it. Mr. Havell was charmed at the sight of this image and spoke highly of it. 22.

B (b) 186:—The image of the Buddha seated in *Dharmachakra mudrā.* On either side of it there is an image of Bodhisattva. The principal image is seated after the European fashion. Both of its legs are

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22. Indian Sculpture and Painting, p. 39.

broken. There is no ornamental work in its halo. On either side of the halo there are two divine figures represented as flying on the wing with garlands in their hands. The Bodhisattva Maitreya stands on the right side of the Buddha with a little deer. In the right hand of the Bodhisattva there is a rosary and on its left hand it holds the pot of nectar. On the left side of the Buddha there is the image of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara or Padmapāni. The right hand of this image is raised in *Abhayamudra* and in its left hand there is a lotus. This image seems to be older than the previous one as it is less elaborate in respect of design and inferior in point of workmanship and as its halo is devoid of any ornamental work. All the images of the Gupta Age were made of sand-stone. They were mostly monoliths of stone and stood on a "Lion-seat".

B (d) 1. The image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara standing on a lotus. It has no right hand. Its left hand was broken. But the broken parts have now been restored. In its left hand it holds a lotus. The right hand is placed in *Varada mudra*, which is so characteristic of Avalokitesvara. 23. The upper part

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23 'तत·· ······आत्मनं भगवन्तं ध्यायेत्;हिमकर कोटी–किरणावदा तदह मुरुजटामुकुटमिताभकृतशेखरं विश्वनलिनीनिषण्ण-शशिमण्डलोर्द्धे पर्यङ्कनिपण्यासकला-

of the image is uncovered. The lower garment is fastened to the waist by means of an ornamented belt. 24. A sacred thread like what the Hindus use hangs on its breast. Its hair is tied like the matted locks of a yogi. In front of this braid of hair there is the figure of the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha which is the characteristic feature of Avalokitesvara. At the feet of this Bodhisattva and below its right hand, there are two figures of *Pretas* or spirits. The benevolent deity gives them to drink the nectar in its right hand. This image accords with the *dhyana* of Bodhisattva. Only the figures of Tārā, Sudhanakumāra, Bhṛikuṭi, Hayagriva have not been shewn in it. At its pedestal there is an inscription in the Gupta script containing the name of the donor of the image. The upper part of this sculpture bears testimony to its high workmanship.

B (d) 2. The figure of Bodhisattva:—Pandit Dayārām Sāhani calls this the image of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. We, however, cannot agree with him. According to its

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वज्रारधरं स्मेरमुखं द्विरष्ट-वर्षदेशीयं दक्षिणेन वरदकरं वामकरेण सनाल कमलधरं Foucher, Etude Sur i Iconographie Bouddhique, P. 25-26.

24. There is a Similar image of Padmapani found at Sarnath in the Calcutta Museum. It also bears a belt on its waist. Cf. Fig. S. 37. Anderson, Cat. Part II.

dhyāna the Bodhisattva Maitreya has got three eyes, and four hands. Another feature of the deity is '*Vyākhyāna mudrā*' 25. This image has got none of these signs. On the other hand, it holds a lotus unsevered from it stalk in its left hand. There is the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha on its head. Its right hand is also placed in *Varada mudrā*. From these signs we are inclined to call it the image of Avalokiteśvara.

B (d) 6. The image of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the god of wisdom. The head of the image was found separated from the body. It has no right hand. Perhaps it was placed in *Varada mudrā*. The left hand holds a lotus with a stalk. On the head of the image is seen the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha Akshyobhya which is the peculiar feature of Mañjusrī. According to the *dhyāna* of Mañjusrī there ought to have been the figures of Sudhanakumāra and Jamāri respectively on the right and the left side of the image. 26. But on the right side of it there is the image of Bhṛikuṭi Tārā and

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25. "......विश्व कमकास्थितं त्रिनेत्रं, चतुर्भुज......व्याख्यानमुद्राधरकरद्वयं Foucher, p. 48.

26. "आत्मनं—मंजुश्रीरूप विभावयेत; पीतवर्णं व्याख्यानमुद्राधरं रत्नभूषणं रत्नमुकुटिनं वामेनोतपलसिंहासनस्थं अक्षोभ्यक्रान्तमौलिनं भावयेत आत्मानं। ततो दक्षिणपार्श्वे हुङ्कार वीजं सम्भवः सुधनकुमारः' * * * वामपार्श्वे यमारि।

that of Mṛityuvanchana Tārā on the left. Behind this image there is incised the Buddhistic mantra beginning with—ये धर्म हेतुप्रभवा" &c., &c., 27

After the Gupta Period, there was a rapid decline of Buddhism in India. The Buddhists now began to worship many of the gods and goddesses of Hindu Tāntrikism. From this time began what is technically called the "Guhya dharma" of the Buddhists under the names of Mantrayāna, kālachakra, Vajrayāna and others. These Buddhists worshipped not only their own deities but also a number of new gods and goddesses some of them having hideous looks. Some such images may be seen at Sarnath. Of the images of ancient times those of the Buddha sitting in *Dhyānamudrā*, *Abhaya mudrā*, or *Bhumisparsha mudrā* as well as of the two Bodhisattvas Avalokiteswara and Maitreya may be specially mentioned. As they are of the same of

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27. The image of Mañjuśrī in the Sahitya Parisad Museum holds a sword and a lotus in its hand. No second image of this kind has as yet been found. From this it appears that the images of Mañjusrī were not invariably made in conformity with the *dhyāna* of the god. See Mr. Banerjee's Parisad Catalogue p. 4, Image No 16.

those of the Gupta period we do not think it necessary to give here a detailed account of them. There is also a large number of the images of the Buddha represented as turning the wheel of Law in motion No. B (c) 1, B (c) 35, 38 40, 42, 46, 57, 59, 61. We give below an account of the most important of these images.

B (c) 1. The lower portion of an image of the Buddha seated in *Dharmachakra mudrā*. In the 'crosslegged posture' of the image, only the two feet and the pedestal may be seen. The other parts of it have been broken. The pedestal is very beautiful to look at. No other image at Sarnath has such a pedestal. At the head of the pedestal there is the famous inscription of the king Mahīpāla. In the lower part of it the Buddhistic mantra "ये धर्म हेतुप्रभवा", etc. is inscribed.

The middle portion of it is divided into seven parts, each part having a figure in it. In the centre there is the *Dharmachakra* with two deer lying on either side of it. On each side of the deer there is a lion. By the side of the lions there are two short human figures holding the seat of the Buddha. These figures seem to be that of Māra and his daughter. The images of the Panchavargiya sages have not been given in this pedestal.

B (c) 2:—The image of the Buddha seated in *Bhūmisparsha Mudrā*:—This image is like the one of the kind described before. It is very beautiful to look at. As a matter of fact, it may be called the best of its kind. The upper part of the lion-seat of the image is decorated with ornamental work and resembles the pillared foundation of a house. On each side of the shoulders of the image, there is a divine figure sitting with a garland in its hand. Its halo is not semi-circular but somewhat segmental. Most probably it was from this time that the halo of images assumed the shape of the 'chāla' of the Goddess Durga of Bengal.

B (c) 43:—The image of the Buddha seated in European fashion. The image has no head. Its hands and legs are broken. On the right side of it, the Bodhisattva Maitreya stands holding a chowri and a pot of nectar in the hand; and on its left side there is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara holding in its hand a lotus and a *chowri*. At the foot of the image, there are the figures of the Panchavargiya Rishis and the donor.

B (d) 8. The image of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara sitting in *Lalitāsana* or *Ardhaparyankāsana* Its right hand is placed upon the left knee in *Varada mudra*. In the left hand, there is a lotus and it is also

placed on the knee. It wears a number of ornaments viz. necklace, a thin necklace resembling the Holy thread, *Keyura* of excellent workmanship and another ornament below the navel. There is also the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha on its forehead. The halo of this image is made in Māgadhi style like that of image No. B (c) 2. On the right side of the halo there is a small image of the Buddha represented in *Varada Mudrā*. The make of the image is admirable. On its pedestal the Buddhist formula is inscribed in the script of the 9th century.

B (b) 17. The image of Avalokitesvara sitting on a lotus with its hand placed in *Varada Mudra*. Above it there are the five Dhyāni Buddhas, the centre being occupied by Amitābha. Tārā stands on the right side of the image. Below it there is Sudhana Kumār with its hands folded. On its left side there is Bhṛikuṭi below which Hayagriva may be seen. On the pointed ends of the pedestal there are images of men and women. This image is according to the "Sādhana" of Avalokiteśvara and it may be regarded as a supplement of the image No. B (l) 1.

B (d) 20 :—The image of Bodhisattva. On its head there is a turban of the shape of a cone. It holds

'Vajra' in the right hand and 'Vajra ghaṇṭā' in the left. The halo of this image is of the Magadhi style. On its forehead the Dhyani Buddha Akshyobhya is placed in *Bhumisparśa Mudrā.* Such images are called Bodhisattva 'Vajrasattva' in Tibet (28.)

B (f) 2—The image of Tārā in standing posture. This image has no fore-arm. Its nose and ears are broken. The right hand seems to have been raised in *Varada Mudra.* There was a blue lotus in her left hand. The greater part of the stalk may now be seen. The upper part of the image is without any cover. Its lower part is covered with a garment. An idea of the ornaments used in those days may be had from the ornaments of this image. It has a girdle on the waist (29.) On its head there is a crown decked with gems and jewels in which there is the image of the Dhyāni Buddha Amoghasiddhi. On its right side there is the image of Mārīchī with Vajra on the breast

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28. Rai Dayaram Sahni has referred to 'No 19 image from Magadha" of Calcutta Museum. No Such image is known from the Catalogne of the same museum ! Is it purely fanciful ?.

29. The girdle of such kind has probably been described in the *Mudrārākṣasa* (27) verse as 'तारा विचित्र रुचिरं रशना कलापम्'

Plate II.



Buddhist Tārā seated in the *Lalitāsana*.

To face p. 127.

and the *Asoka* flower on the left hand. On its left side there is the figure of Ekajaṭā with mutilated hands and a large belly. The figures of two attendants on both sides of the principal image were the peculiar feature of the images of Mañjusrī and other Bodhisattvas of the Gupta age. This peculiarity may also be noticed in the images of Vishnu. Hence it is clear that there was a gradual development of this subject in Iconography. The features of this image are strictly in accordance with its *Sādhana* (30.) Bauddha Tārā is a goddess of the Mahāyāna School and is the sole "Energy" (शक्ति) of the Bodhisattva Padmapāni.

B (f) 7:—The image of Tārā sitting in *Lalitāsana* : This image has some peculiar features. The back ground contains figures of men, creepers and leaves. It has no abundance of ornaments. Below the principal image there is an image of a votary in a kneeling posture. At the first sight it seems to be the image of the Hindu Goddess Kamalā. But on a careful examination it appears to be the image of the Bauddha Goddess Tārā.

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30. "× × × हरितामम्मोघसिद्धिमुकुटां वरदोत्पलधारि-दक्षिण-वामकरां अशोक कान्त-मारीच्य कजटा व्यग्रदक्षिण-वामदिग् वागम् दिव्यकुमारीम्, अलङ्कार-वती-ध्यात्वा-···Foucher, Ibid p. 65

B (f) 8. The image of Vajra Tārā with eight hands and four heads. All the left hands are broken. Only parts of the right hands are in existence. It has three eyes. On its clotted hair there are two figures of Akshyobhya, one of Amitābha and one of Vairochana. On the back-head there is only the figure of AmoghaSiddhi sitting in Abhaya 'Mudrā. There are no images on the other two hands. There are beautiful ornaments on its neck and hand 21.

B (f) 19 :—The image of Vasundharā without head. This image is broken in various places. There are signs to show that it had a number of ornaments. Its right hand is placed in *Varada Mudrā.* According to the *dhyāna* of this image its left hand holds the ears of paddy. Another feature of this image is that there are two gem-pots beneath its feet. According to its *Sādhana* the pot should be in its left hand. On either side of the principal image there are two diminutive images of the same deity. There are both paddy-ears and pots in the hands of these images. At

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31 . The *Sādhana* of Vajra Tārā is as follors:—
××× अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां महालंकार भूषितां.........पीत-कृष्णा-सित-रक्त सव्यावर्त्त चतुर्मुखां,प्रतिमुखं त्रिनत्रां च वज्रपर्यङ्कसंस्थिताम्''—Ibid. p. 70. See R. D. Banerjea's Banglār Itihas for Vajra-Tara in *Vajra-pariyanka*

Plate III.



Mārīcī or the Buddhist Aurorā.

To face p. 129.

the first sight this image may seem to be like the image of Tārā No. B. (f) 2. It has not a number of female friends which seems to be its peculiar feature according to its Sādhana. Men do not now make the images of their deities strictly in accordance with the *dhyana*, nor did they do so in the remote past 32.

B (f) 23. The image of Mārīchī in *Pratyālīḍha* attitude. This image has got three heads and six hands. The central head is bigger than the others. The head on the felt side resembles that of a hog. There are signs of *Vajra* on the uplifted hand on the right side For this reason, another name of a Mārīchī is Vajra Vārāhī. The second hand on this side holds an arrow and the third, a hook. It seems that the first hand on the left side held *Aśoka* flower. The second hand holds a bow. The third hand is placed on the breast in *Tarjanīdhara mudrā*. Images of Mārīchī discovered else where have eight hands. But this image has only six hands. As it has three hands it is only proper that the number of its hands should be six and not

32. The *Sadhana* of this image is as follors :—
"......द्विभुजैकमुखींपीतां नवयौवनाभरण-वस्त्रविभूषितां, धान्य-अरी-नाना रत्न-वर्षं-धटवामहस्तां, दक्षिणेन वरदां अनेकसखीजनपरिवृतां. विश्वपद्मचन्द्रासनस्थां रत्नसम्भवमुकुटिनीम् Ibd, p. 85.

eight. We are led to believe that at first this deity had had only six hands. It was given two additional hands afterwards. Hence it may be said that this image was the most ancient of its kind. On its head there is the image of the Dhyāni Buddha Vairochana, which is one of its features according to the *Sādhana*. On its pedestal, seven small hogs stand side by side. These are the carriers of the chariot of Mārīchī. In the middle, there is a female figure which seems to be the image of the charioteer. But there is no mention of this image in the *Sādhana*. The pedestal also bears a small inscription, which, however, is too indistinct to be deciphered. Besides this image a number of images of Mārīchī have been discovered in Bengal and Magadha. Many such images of different sizes may be seen in the musems of Culcutta and Lucknow as well as in the Vārendra Research Society at Rājshāhi. The photo of the image in the Culcutta museum may be seen in M.Foucher's book on Iconography. 33. This image and the one found in

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३३. —"+ + सूर्यें पीत-मांकार ध्नात्वा, तद्विनिंगत रश्मिनिवहै राकांशे समाकृष्य भगवतीं अग्रत स्थापयेत गौरीं त्रिमुखीं, त्रिनेत्रां अष्टभुजां, रक्त दक्षिण मुखीं नीलविकृतवामबराहमुखीं, वज्रांकुशशरसूचीं धारि दक्षिण चतुःकरां अशोकपल्लवचापसूत्रतर्ज्जनीवामचतुःकरां वैरोचनमुकुटिनीं नानाभरणवतीं, चैत्यगर्भस्थितां रक्ताम्बर कंचुकोत्तरीयां, सप्तशूकररथारूढां प्रत्यालीढपदां.........

Mayurbhanja 34 are finer than that of Sarnath and bear testimony to higher sculptural skill. This fact also indicates that the Sarnath image is the oldest of its kind. Many scholars have attempted to show a relation between the image of Mārīchī and that of the sun-god. As there are seven horses who are being driven by Aruna below the image of the sun, so this image, too has below it the figures of seven hogs who are represented as being driven by a female charioteer. Dr. Vogel wrongly supposed the seven horses to be the allegorical representation of seven days and gave to Mārīchī the name of Ushā. But we are inclined to hold that the seven horses symbolise the seven colours of the rays of the sun. The name *Mārīchī* is evidently derived from the word *Marīchi.* Hence it seems but natural that this image is the symbol of the Energy of the sun god. Again, the seven hogs of Mārīchī pierce the darkness of the nights with their teeth and thus pave the way for the rise of the sun. There is a temple of Vārāhī at Benares. It is a noteworthy thing that none can have an access in it after sunrise. Again Varāha is the name of an avatāra or incarnation of Vishnu. His Energy is called Vārāhī. There is ample testimony

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(34). Mayurbhanja Archaeological Survey, p. XCII.

in the Vedic literature to show that the sun is but another form of Vishnu 35 Hence it seems that the nature of Mārīchī or Vārāhī is rather complex and myst-rious. The mother of Sakyamuni also was called Mārīchī. It is a very difficult thing to establish any connexion between her and the deity. Mr. Vasu saw Mārīchī worshipped under the name of Chaṇḍī in some places in Mayurbhanja. Every one knows that *Chaṇḍāṁsu* is a name of the sun. The two images of Vārāhī discovered by him in Mayurbhanja are in accordance with the *Dhyāna* of Mantramahodadhi. Here also we have an allusion to the restoration of the Earth. In Tibet Vajravārāhī is still warshipped under name of 'Radorje phagmo'. The Tibetan image resembles the image of the Hindu Goddess Tārā or Kāli. The garland of heads hangs round its neck. A human figure

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(35). "आदित् प्रत्नस्य चेतसो ज्योतिष पश्यन्ति वासरम्" प्र. मण्डल.

5. Rik 10. &c. refers to the Sun-god as Narayana. From a comparison of the Gāyatri Mantra, the *dhyana* of Visnu as "ध्येयः सदा सवितृमण्डलमध्यवर्त्ती नारायणः" &c., the *Hiranmaya Puruṣa* of Chāndyogya, one can infer that Visnu and the sun are one and the same. Moreover, an allegory as to how Visnu evolved into the sun is given in the *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa*, (1021 p. XIV., 1s. v. Bap. 11-12).

)Mahādeva ?) lies beneath its feet. On both sides of it there are Dākinis and Yoginis. The mouth resembles that of the hog. 36. Again, the deity Mārīchī is worshipped in Tibet under the name of "od-ser-chonmo." This image is seated on a chariot. It has six hands and three heads and it has hogs for its vehicles.

B (h) 1. The image of Śiva with ten hands. This image is the tallest at Sarnath, its height being 12 feet. It is represented as piercing an Asura with the trident which it holds in two of its right hands. The four other hands on the right side hold a sword, an arrow, a drum and some unknown thing. Its left hands hold a mace, a shield, a pot and the bow called *pināka.* The right hand of the Asura holds a sword. Its left hand is broken. At the foot of the image of Siva, there are the images of a second Asura and a bull. At the first sight the image appears to be that of Hanumān or Mahāvīra. We have seen such an image of Mahāvīra in Hanumānadhārā in Chitrakuṭa. Mahāvīra or Hanuman is but another form of Śiva. Hence there is nothing unnatural in the similarity be tween the two images.

(36). Abh. 131 and abb 118 Die Gottin Mārichi, Grünwedel's Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet under Mongolei—p. 145, 157.

Besides the images described above there is another class of sculptural relics at Sarnath. These were sculptured on single slabs of stone. In most of them scenes from the life of the Buddha have been represented. Some of them represent particular Jataka stories. The subject matter of these sculptures are too well-known to require any mention here. Hence we shall only give an explanaticn of the slabs themselves. The origin of this kind of sculptural works is a proper subject of discussion. According to Dr. Vogel, they originated in Gandhara. Their number decreased with the decline of Buddhism. It is for this reason that their number is few at Muttra and Sarnath. But we cannot see eye tc eye with him. The number of such slabs found in Gandhara is the largest. There is also a large number of each kind of them e.g. sculptures No. 127, 369, 1241, 1242 which represent the birth of the Buddha, Nos. 138, 251, 350, 147, depicting the dream of Māyā Devi. There are also a number of slabs representing the Mahāniskramana of the Buddha. A close examination of them indicates that they bear testimony to an advanced stage of sculptural art. 37. Hence, the

(37). See for instance Sculpture No. 787, Hand-book to the Peshwar Museum by Dr. D. B. Spooner.

conclusion is irresistible that they were of a later date than those of Muttra and Sarnath. Dr. Vogel asserts without advancing any proof that all these slabs found at Sarnath belonged to the Gupta period. We, however, cannot accept his views on this point. In the slabs of Muttra we notice the so called Greek influence (38) whereas those at Sarnath bear no trace of such influence. Still Dr. Vogel holds that these two kinds of sculptures were of the same date. Again, he says that it is striking that Indian Sculptors having learnt from the Greeks the custom of representing scenes in separate panels have again reverted to the old System of crowding many scenes in one panel. eg. Sarnath no. c. (a) 2. Dr. Vogel could not form a right estimate of the evolution of this kind of sculpture and hence he was so much surprised. In the slabs found at Sanchi, we notice the representation of scenes from the Buddhistic stories. 39. They were made long before the beginning of the Christian era and their style seems to be the oldest in point of time. 40. Their peculiar feature is that there

(38). See Slab no H. I, no H, II. Mathura Catalague by Vogel.

(39). See the picture of the relief from the east gateway at Sanchi.

(40). Buddhist art in India, by Prof. A. Grünwedel p. 628.

is no division of scenes in them. There are divisions of scenes in the slabs of Gāndhāra. Both these features are noticeable in the Sarnath slabs. Hence we may reasonably conclude that these slabs belong to the transitional period of this kind of sculpture. Therefore we may say that the Gandhara slabs are of a later date than the Sarnath ones. The slabs of Muttra represent the middle stage between these two styles of sculpture. We now proceed to give a brief account of the important slabs found at Sarnath.

C (a) 1:—This slab is long in shape with a stupa at its head. It is divided into four parts each part representing noteworthy scenes from the life of the Buddha. In the lowest part the birth-scene of the Buddha has been sculptured. In the Lumbini garden near Kapilāvāstu, Maya Devi, the mother of the Buddha plucks sāla flowers with her right hand when Gautama issues from her right side. The God Brahmā takes hold of the child. The image of Brahmā is rather indistinct. On the left side of Maya Devi stands her sister Prajāpati, The Nāga Kings Nanda and Upananda hold a jar of water above the head of the child. This water falls in a thousand jets on Gautama. This slab is not so valuable in point of sculptural design. Various slabs of this

kind have been found at Gāndhāra, Muttra and other places. 41, When all these slabs are compared, two important things become quite clear, the first being that slabs at Muttra and in Gandhara indicate a more advanced stage in the development of sculpture, and the second that the representations in the Gandhara slabs are more elaborate than of those found at Sarnath. For instance, in the Gāndhara sculpture, there are two figures of newly born Gautama; in the second, he is preaching the fact of his supreme position in the world. From these two facts, it may be clearly canjectured that the Sārnāth representation is comparatively early in the evolution of such sculptures (42). This slab is described as belonging to the Gupta Age. But the

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(41). Grünwedel's "Buddhist art in India" p. 111-113 cf. figs, No. 64, 65, 66. Vogel's Mathura Catalogue p. 30, plate VI. No. H. I;

(42). On the Stupa at the top of this slab, the Buddhist formula "Ye dharma hetu" etc. has been engraved. From this no conclusion as to its ascription to the Gupta age can be safely drawn. For this formula can be seen in the image of any age. The case would have been different had we seen the donor's name in the Gupta script. It is a common thing to find inscriptions of different ages on the same piece of stone.

Catalogue is silent on the grounds which may have led to this conclusion.

The slab contains scenes of Gautama's *Sambodhi* at Gayā, the Turning of the wheel of the Law at Sārnāth and his Parinirvāṇa.

The *Saṃbodhi* scene is as follows.—The Buddha is sitting in the posture of *Bhumisparśa* under the Bodhi tree. On his right is Māra with a bow and an arrow. At his back stands his attendant. Again, we see a figure of Māra as vanquished by the Buddha. On the left of the main figure, two daughters of Māra are standing to tempt the Buddha.

In the "Dharma Chakra" scene, the Buddha is preaching in the middle, seated in the *Dharma Chakra* posture. On his right is the Bodhisattva Maitreya holding a rosary and a fly-whisk. On the left, stands the Bodhisattva Avalokiteswar in the *Varada mudrā.* At the corners of this slab, one notices two flying deities with garlands. It is remarkable, in this connection that the figures are endowed with two wings. This custom of giving wings never to be met with in any Indian art except in that Gāndhār (43). This also points to the close relation

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(43). Sarnath Catalogue pp. 184, 185.

between Sārnāth and Gāndhāra artists. At the base of the slab, as usual, are the engraved figures of antelopes a wheel, the five ascetics and the donor.

In the uppermost panel of the slab, we find the *Parinirvāna* scene or the scene of the Great Decease of Buddha. The Buddha is lying on a couch with thick feet, in front of which the mourning five ascetics may be seen. With the *Kamaṇḍalu* placed on a trident by his side, Subhadra, the last disciple of the Buddha, a native of Kusinagar sits turning his back in the posture of *Padmāsana*. At the feet of the Master may be noticed the figure of Mahākāśyapa of Rājgriha and that of Bhikṣu Upavāna near the head with a fan in his hand. Behind the dying Master, five more people in mourning may be seen. Mr. Sāhni mentions here four instead of five figures.

C (a) 3.—This engraved slab is divided into eight panels. In the lowest line on the left is the scene of Buddha's birth, on the right, his enlightenment. At the uppermost line, the lelt corner shows the *Dharma-chakra* scene, the right one the *Parinirvāna* scene. These have been already described. Now the middle two lines require some explanation. Of these, the upper

line at the left corner depicts Buddha's descent to Saṁkāsya from the *Trayastriṁśa* heaven, the Buddha standing in the *Varadamudrā* between Indra holding an umbrella and Brahmā a pitcher. At the right of this scene is the scene of the Mirade of Buddha at Srāvasti. To astonish the heretics, the Buddha here is preaching simultaneously at different places. At the feet of the main figure, is kneeling the devout follower of Buddha at the other side of whom remains King Prasenajit of Srāvasti spell bound at the miracle of the Great Teacher. Just below this line at the left corner, a monkey is offering honey to Buddha in his former age in the forest called *Pārileyakavana*. The monkey is approaching the Buddha from the right with honey in hand. The seated Buddha has also a pot to receive it. Just at the left, we find the two feet and the tail of the monkey. For the story tells us that after this meritorious act, the monkey drops himself into a well in order that he may receive in next birth as a human being. The figure of a man with sword at the left of Buddha is the figure of the monkey in the next life. The right corner of this line shows us the miraculous incident of Rajgriha. The story is that a Brāhman invited Buddha and his five-hundred disciples to a

dinner. While he was going there, Devadatta, the persecuter of Buddhism, sent an elephant called Nālāgiri to kill the Buddha. The elephant instead ot killing him, kneels down before him. At the left, is the figure of Ānanda, his most favourite disciple.

C (a) 2. In this inscribed slab, four principal incidents of Buddha's life have been depicted in three separate parts. The upper part is broken, which certainly contained another portion of the subject. In the lowest panel, the Queen-mother Māyā sees a dream in which the Buddha is descending from the Buddhist heaven called *Tusita* in the shape of a white elephant. This is, in reality, Māyā's conception. At the right corner of this portion, the scene of Buddha's birth has been shewn. This was described above. Just above this part, at the left is the scene of Buddha's Great Renunciation and at the right that of his S*ambodhi* or the Enlightenment. In the Renunciation scene, he is leaving home on his horse named *Kantkaka.* In front of the horse is the figure of Chhandaka, his groom, who is taking the royal robe from his master. Behind the horse, the Bodhisattva is cutting his hair with his sword. Again, we find Sujātā is giving rice-pudding to Buddha afflicted with long fasting. Next to it, is

the scene where Buddha is talking with Kālika, the King of Serpents. To the right of this, is shown the Buddha in the state of meditation under the shade of an umbrella. In the uppermost line, at the left corner, the Buddha is attaining the Enlightenment in the posture of *Bhumisparśa*, at the right, one notices the scene of *Dharmachakra* or the first preaching of Buddhism.

D (d) 1—An engraved lintel measuring 16′ × 1′. 10″ inches. The door of which the arch it supported must have of a massive size. The design and the workmanship of the piece are exceptionally fine. The art exhibited here must attract admiration from all. Repeated glances at it may not suffice to satisfy people's artistic curiosities. The stone belongs to the Gupta Age as the sign of *Kirttimukha* in many places may prove this assumption. The whole lintel is mainly divided into six parts. Starting from the left, the first part shows the Buddhist Kuvera, the God of Wealth, holding in his right hand a *Bijora* and Balabhadra in his left hand. Again, in the sixth part, a similar figure of Kubera is noticeable. In the second part an ornamental steeple of a temple flanks a panel in which three musicians have been carved. From the second part to the fifth part, the story of *Kṣhantivādi-Jātaka*

has been depicted. The Jātaka in short is as follows:—The Bodhisattva in this age has acquired the fame for forbearing physical afflictions and received the name of *Kṣāntivādi.* He used to live in a lonely but beautiful forest and pious people from all parts used to come to him for his teaching. One day, the king of Benares named Kalâbu for a pleasure party went there and was making merriment with some dancing girls. The king suddenly fell into a sleep as he was listening to the sweet music of his companions. Meanwhile, the girls were roaming about the forest and came near the ascetic Bodhisattva. Being moved by his meditation, they prayed for his teachings. Meanwhile, the king awaking and finding nobody by his side, became terribly angry and at last began scolding Kshāntivādi in all possible ways. Kṣhāntivādi was unmoved. Then, the king, without listening to the prayers of his companions, mercilessly cut down one hand of Kṣhāntivādi with his sword. Still, he was unmoved. At this wonderful fortitude of the *Yogi*, the king's heart trembled with fear and remorse. But there was no time for the remorse. The whole forest was suddenly ablaze, the earth trembled and quickly enough, the king was burnt

to ashes (44). In the second part of the slab, the king though prevented by the dancing girls, is cutting the hand of Kṣāntivādi. In the third part of the slab as well as in the fourth part, the music girls are playing on *Vīnā*, drum &c. In the fifth part, the Bodhisattva is rapt in meditation, the king's dancing girls are surrounding him. The sixth part, as mentioned above, shows the figure of Jambhala.

Besides the sculptures we have hitherto described and discussed, there are many images and engarved stones in the rooms of the Museum. But as they are of subordinate importance, we have left them out of our account. In addition to sculptures and engraved slabs, broken capitals, small steeples, *chaityas*, inscribed stones have been heaped in the Museum. In one room in the North, earthen pots, jars, household utensils may he seen with interest. Inscribed earthen seals and bricks of great antiquity are also there. All these require very little explanation.

Next, to the North of the Museum, on a raised

(44.) The Jātaka (ed. Fausbøll) vol III. pp. 39-44 (Translated and edited by Cowell) and Jātakamala by M. M. Higgins published at Colombo, 1914.

ground, there is the old sculpture-shed enshrining some Jaina and Hindu images. None of these has been discovered in Sārnāth. They had originally been all preserved in the Queen's College compound and latterly at the desire of Lord Curzon were brought to Sārnāth. Amongst these sculptures, there are Hindu and Jaina images of Mediaeval and Gupta Period. The Hindu images comprise the figures of Śiva, Aṣṭamātrika, and Gaṇeśa The Jaina sculptures include prominently the figures of Ādināth, Shāntināth, Ajitanāth, Śreyāṁśanāth and Mahāvīra. The Hindu images are too clear and well known to admit of a fresh explanation here.

Cnapter VI.

Epigraphy.

The excavation work at Sarnath has yielded not only a number of sculptural relics of exquisite workmanship but also some inscriptions which throw a flood of light on the history of the place. These inscriptions were engraved in various places and on various occasions. Broadly speaking, they may be arranged under four heads, viz (1) Proclamatory (2) Installant (3) Dedicatory (4) Ecclesiastical. Some of them were inscribed on pillars, some on railings, some on umbrellas and some on the pedestal of images, the last-mentioned class forming the majority of them. Besides these, some letters are seen inscribed on bricks, seals, and earthen jars. These things are highly valuable from the historian's point of view. Simply from the shape of the letters inscribed on the thing, its approximate date may be ascertained. The inscriptions of Sarnath have been describ ed and commented upon in various magazines by Indian as well as foreign scholars. Their views have sometimes been criticised and sometimes refuted by other

Plate IV.



Asoka Pillar with the Edict.

To face p. 147.

scholars. We now proceed to discuss these inscriptions chronologically.

THE INSCRIPTION OF ASOKA

Of all the finds at Sarnath the stone pillar of Asoka is the most ancient and historically the most valuable. Its workmanship has attracted the universal admiration Its discoverer Mr. F. O. Oertel deserves the gratitude of all students of Indian antiquary. It was due to him that the Capital was raised carefully and preserved intact. It may now be found in the museum at Sarnath. Its lower portion now lies buried under a stone shade in front of the western door of the main shrine. The inscription we propose to discuss was discovered on this pillar. Besides that of Asoka, two smaller inscriptions are seen on it. One of them records the 10th day of the 1st half of the month in the dewy season of the fortieth year of the king Aśvaghosh This inscription was discussed in the Royal Asiatic Society's Journal of London. The other inscription is a grant. Both of them are written in the Kushan script. They will be discused hereafter in the proper place. The first three lines of the inscription of Asoka have been broken off. But the main portion of it still remains intact.

Messrs. Boyer, Senart, Thomas, Vogel, the late Dr. Venis and other archæological experts have very minutely dealt with this inscription. Though they differ in some minor details yet there is unanimity among them as regards the general interpretation of it. It seems that this inscription was addressed to the principal officials in the capital city as well as the provinces. Its first three lines have been so badly effaced that there is no means of knowing the meaning of the first sentence The first thing in this inscription is that none is entitled to create any schism in the Saṁgha taking advantage of the religious quarrels therein. The second thing in it is how punishment is to be awarded to the authors of such schisms. For such an unwarrantable conduct the wrongdoer should be expelled from the Saṁgha and driven to a place outside the Vihāra. Buddha Ghosh also makes mention of similar punishment being meted out to authors of religious quarrels in his description of the assembly of Asoka. There are similar inscriptions on the pillars at Sanchi and Allahabad.

In another part of this inscription there is mention of the procedure to be adopted for the promulgation of the imperial command. This order is to be published

in the Saṅghas of Bhikshus and Bhikshunis as well as those places where people congregate. It also reminded the royal officer that a true copy of the proclamation has been inscribed in their principal court. They were required to send copies of it to all places within their juridition and to bring it to the notice of officers in charge of provinces having fortified stations. This inscription is highly valuable to Buddhistic research-scholars. From it we learn that the sovereign was the head of 'Saddharma' and that in that capacity he exercised control over the Vihars. It also proves that the tradition about Asoka's severity towards the authors of religious querrels is not a myth. This inscription is silent as to its date. According to some authorities it was inscribed during Asoka's pilgrimage. If this view be accepted as true it is to be admitted that this inscription is of the same date as the Tarai pillar inscription. But we notice that the Prayag inscription of Asoka which resembles this one is of a later date than the Tarai inscription i. e. its date was subsequent to the 27th year or the reign of Asoka or 243 B. C. Hence we may hold that the Sarnath inscription is of the same date as the Allahabad inscription 2. The Emperor made this proclamation in accordance with

the resolution adopted by the religious assembly held at Pataliputra. The Pali literature also furnishes direct proof on this point.

The Text of the inscription.

१. देवा ....

२. एल ... ...

३. पाट ... ... ये केनपि संघे भेतवे ए चुंखो

४. [भिखु-वा-भिखुनि-वा] संधं भा [खति] से ओदा-तानिदुस [।] संनंधापयिया अनावासंसि

५. आवासयिये ॥ हेवं इयं सासने भिखु संघसि च भिखुनि संघसि च विंनपायितविये ॥

६. हेवं देवानं पिये आहा ॥ हेदिसा च इका लिपी तुफाकं-तिकं हुवा ति संसलनसि निखिता ॥

७. इकं च लिपिं हेदिसमेव उपासकानं तिकं निखिपाथ ॥ तेपि च उपासका अनुपोसथं याबु

८. एतमेव सासनं विस्वंसयितवे ॥ अनुपोसथं च धुवाये इकिके महामातेपोसथाये ॥

९. याति एतमेव सासनं विस्वंसयितवे आजानितवे च ॥ आवतके च तुफाकं आहाले

१०. सवत विवासयाथ तुके एतेन वियंजनेन । हेमेव सवेसु कोट विसवेसु एतेन ॥

११. वियजंनेन विवासापयाथा ॥ (3)

(3) J. & Proceedings of the A. S. B. Vol III. No 1.

Like other inscriptions of Asoka it is written in the ancient Mauryya or Brāhmi script. There is no novelty in the letters used in it. Those who desire to be familiar with the peculiarities of the Brāhmi script may read Dr. Bühler's book "On the origin of the Indian Brāhmi Alphabet."

Language:—The peculiarities of the language of this inscription are Similar to those of the inscriptions at Khalsi, Dhauli, Jaugada, Radhia, Mathia, Rupnath, Bairat, Sasaram and Barābar cave. e.g., the use of the vowel ए in singular 1st case-ending, the use of ल for र and न for ण, the use of only स and the use of हेवं and हेदिसा in place of एवं and ईदृश

1st line:—देवा [नां प्रिय] In his inscriptions, Asoka invariably used this epithet. In the Purānas, Asoka every where has been called Asokavardhana. From the first line of Rock edict No VIII it appears that his ancestors also called themselves देवानां प्रिय (beloved of the gods); the epithet Piyadassana is but another form of Piyadasi. This word has been used in the chronicles of Ceylon. It has also been used as an adjunct to the name of Chandragupta in the drama Mudrārākṣhasa. Hence Asoka of the Purāṇas as well as of the Ceylonese chronicles is

identical with Piyadasi of the inscriptions. For a detailed discussion on this matter, the reader is referred to two articles bearing on it in J. R. A. S. 1901. The name Asoka occurs in the new Maski inscription.

3rd line:—भेतवे—formed by the use of the Vedic suffix तुमुन. The root √भिद् has undergone गुण and तु has been added to it and thus a noun has been formed. The following is the form in the Dative Case.

=भिद्+तु

=भेद्+तु

=भेत+तु

=भेत्तु+

=भेतु to it the Dative inflexion has been affixed.

In Vedic Sanskrit, such words when joined with verbs give the meaning in the passive voice. There are many similar words in Pali:

इच्छत्थ थेसु समान कत्तु के सु तवे तुम् वा

(S. C. Vidyabhusana's edition of Kachayan, vii. 2. 12.)

c. f. कातवे, सोतवे। cf. Dhammapada, vex 34. परिफन्दत् इदं चित्तं मारधेयं पहातवे Also वायसं पि पहेतवे (पोहेतुं) Jataka II 175.

खेर i, e, खलु—In Pali, we notice the use of the word कखु Hence it seems that खेर and कखु were derived from

one and the same word. This original word seems to be खूलु

खलु into > कुखु, > ख्लु > खलु > खउ > खो

The vowel when followed by a gutteral or a conjunct letter takes a nasal after it.

4th line, भाखंति Skt भक्ष्यंति Dr. Vogel read it as भिखंति Dr. Venis read it as भाखंति (J. A. S. B. Vol III No. 1. N. S. p. 3)

संनंधापयिया—Skt. सं+नह+निच+ल्यप् (cf from the root √नघ—पिनह्यति, नद्धः (Latin Nodus) Insertion of lengthening of the vowel are not rare in roots with निघ्

अनावासंसि—Dr. Vogel reads the word as अनावासंसि. We accept the reading of Dr. Venis as it seems more reasonable. For evidently it is a technical word. (Vide Sacred Books of the East, Vol XVII p. 388) This word also occurs in the Asoka inscription of Sānchi. The late Mr. V. A. Smith has adopted the text and commentary given by Dr. Venis. (Asoka, 2nd Edition).

6th line—हेदिसा Skt. ईदृशी

इहा—एका (सं) 7 इका This ए is to be pronounced as something between आ and इ Hence it can be easily

(4) > =changes into

changed into इ or अ as the case may be. The word इका has not as yet been met with in any other inscription of Asoka. Hemchandra has used thus "इकमनु=एक मना" in the 20th sloka of the 7th chapter of his Prakrita Kāvya *Kumārapālacharita.* Therefore इक and इकिके (8th line) occuring in this inscription may be taken as good examples of the popular dialect though they are distinct from the भाषा or अपभ्रंश of the grammarians.

तुफाकं—It seems that this word was at first pronounced and used as तुष्माकं । तुष्माक—तुस्माकं (for in Pali, there is no ष) 7 तुस्वाकं (c.f. मन्मथ 7 वन्महो)7 तुस्पाकं (cf. लोचेत्वा – लोचेत्पा)– तुस्फाकं (c. f. विष्फुष्ट – विस्फुट्ट)– (Because in the language of Asoka's time a single letter was used in place of reduplicated letters. The 1st letter of the alphabet when combined with the 2nd left only the 2nd and the 3rd, when combined with the 4th left only the 4th, the other two having been dropped.)

संसलनासि—Skt. संसरणं meaning 'Congregation' In Pali, the word means "wheel" or movement. In the inscription it means the place of meeting. Most probably it refers to the city of Pataliputra.

8th line:—विस्वंसयितवे—Prof. Kern and Dr. Block hold that it is connected with Skt. विश्वासयितुम.

According to them the expression means 'to make one self known'

धुवाये—Skt. ध्रुवं meaning certainly.

इकिके=इक+इक The letter before इ has been dropped. cf. the Vedic expression एक एक where there is no coalescence of vowels according to the rules of Sandhi. Or इकिक - एकक - एकैक।

महामाते—Skt. महामात्रा—a high official cf.
मन्त्रे कर्म्मणि भूषायां वित्ते माने परिच्छदे।
मात्रा च महती येषां महामात्रास्तु ते स्मृता *Apte's Dictionary.*

In Kashmere and other places such officers were appointed for the maintenance of religion.

9th line—आहाले Skt. आधार i. e. province. This is the meaning that the compound word साहार conveys (Mahavagga VI. 30. 4.)

10th line—वियंजनेन Skt. व्यञ्जन In the Rock Edict No. III. Dr. Buhler explains it as 'letter by letter.' Dr. Venis adopts this meaning. But Dr. Vogel explains it as 'royal proclamation' (6).

कोट—The meaning of this word has been given with illustration in Chānakya's *Arthasastra.* (*Int. Ant.* XXXIV. 7.)

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5. ∠=from (to be read from right to left).

6. Epigraphia Indica Vol. VIII part IV.

11th and 12th lines विवासयाथ and विवास-पयाथा According to Dr. Kern the first term means 'to go out on official circuit.' This meaning however hardly suits the context. In the Asoka inscription of Rupnath the expression विवसे तवय is met with. Dr. Venis compared the above words with this expression and came to the conclusion that they all were derived from the root √वस् in the sense of 'shining'. He has further shewn that if this interpretation be accepted the two words व्यढ and विवासा of the Rupnath inscription may also be taken to have been derived from the same root. At the same time it renders facilities for explaining the much-vexed question of the digits 256. If we take विवासायाथ to mean 'shine' the meanings 'to communicate' accord with the inscription.

English Translation :—

Pataliputra—

(Thus saith) His Sacred Majesty ('the beloved of the Gods')—The church should not be rent in twain. Should however, any one, whether he or she be monk or nun splits the order, he (or she) shall be compelled to put on white dress and live outside the church area. This command is to be reported to the male mendicant's as well as the female mendicant's order,

Thus saith His sacred Majesty: A copy of this edict has been written to be kept with you in the place of assembly. You are commanded to write a similar copy for the use of the laity. Let the lay folk in full faith on this edict assemble on every Fast-day. To understand and excute this command for the performance of the fast, let the Mahāmātras come here. Issue the ordinance letter by letter as far as your jurisdiction extends. Similarly, too, have it issued to the letter to all the garrisons and the Districts.

This inscription deals with three things and so it may be divided into three parts. The first part records the imperial behest. If any Bhikshu or Bhikshunī attempts to create schism in the Saṅgha, he or she should be made to wear white garment and should then be expelled from the Saṅgha. There are similar inscriptions at Sanchi and in the fort at Allahabad (Buhler's papers, I. A., Vol. XIX and E. I. pp 366—67). The first portion of these three inscriptions has been very badly effaced. This inscription proves beyond doubt that Asoka was very strict in his dealings with the saṅghas and that he was the religious head of the empire.

The second part of the inscription records the instructions of the emperor to his principal officers

They were informed that it was inscribed for their benefit. They were asked to make copies of the same for the good of the public. This inscription was kept in the Sarnath Vihāra because the officials aswellas the general public were called upon to assemble there on the 'Uposath' day.

In the concluding part of the inscription the emperor directed that attention should be paid to every syllable of it. If the word 'कोट' means a 'fortified station' and if it was not under the Mahāmātras it is quite plain why they were required to bring it to the notice of all outside their jurisdiction.

It is evident from this inscription that during the time of Aśoka the tie of religion was somewhat slackened in the saṅghas. The emperor was eagar to enforce the rules of Buddhism rigidly and with that object in view expelled some of the members who did not conform to the rules of the Buddhistic church. The Ceylonese literature also contains a reference to this fact. It is written in Dharmakīrti's 'Saddharma Saṁgraha' (Edited in the J.P. T.S. for 1890 pp 21—89) that after the year 228 of the Parinirvāna Era the Bhikshus in India did not observe 'Uposatha' for a period of six years. Therefore the emperor Aśoka

assembled the Bhikshus at Aśokārāma. The Sthavira Tishya, the son of Maudgali, presided over this assembly. On inquiry it transpired that the majority of them were not real Bhikshus. So he made them wear white garments and expelled them from the saṅgha. Thereafter all of the assembly observed 'Uposatha'.

Hence it is said;—

संबुद्ध परिनिब्बना द्वे च वस्स पतानि च ।
अटठावीसति वस्सानि राजासोको महीपाति ॥

The above śloka has been taken from the Mahāvaṁsa. The prose portion is based upon Buddhaghosha's 'Samantapasādikā'. The fact of wearing white garment is clear from the expression सेतकानि वड्डकानि occurring in Buddhaghosh's book. The expression 'ओदातानि दुसानि in the inscription points to the same thing. The word 'पाठ' in it refers to the assembly at Pātaliputra. The word भासति' indicates dissension in the sangha. Buddhism was then passing through a crisis and we may reasonably hold that it is this inscription that has been alluded to in the work of Buddhaghosh. In the 8th line of the inscription we find the the word 'महामाते'. They were the overseers of religion appointed by Aśoka after the 13th year of his

reign. Hence it is plain that the Sarnath pillar was not built before the appointment of these overseers i.e. 255 B. C.

Three or four of the railing-posts found at Sarnath bear inscriptions on them. They are written in the Brahmī script and their language is Prākrita. Their date seems to be before the 2nd century B.C. The text and translation of these inscriptions are given below :—

D (a) No 13.

Text.—**निया सोनदेवि (ये)**

Tra.—**सवो दान (म)**

Each of the railing posts was the gift of a male or femalo follower of Buddhism. The whole railing was made by raising subscriptions.

D (a) No 14.

Text,—**सीहये साहि जन्तेयिकाये थवो**

From **सीहये साहि** it seems that the giver was a woman of Persia. We may compare with it the expression "**साहान साही**". But Pt. Dayaram Sahni translates it as *This pillar is the gift of Sīhā with ganteyikā*. We however donot think that this translation is quite accurate.

D (a) No 15

Text—काये भिखुनि वसुतरगुताये दानं थ (भा)

Tr—The gift of भिक्षुणी वसुधरगुप्ता

D (a) No. 16.

xt—Te(भ) रिणिये सहं जतेयिका [ये थबो दानं]

Tr.—The gift of जतेयिका with भरिणी

None has discussed whether जन्तेयिका was the same person as जतेयिका।

There is a small inscription in the Kushan script below the inscription of Aśoka. It runs as follows:—

Text:—+पारिगेय् हे रञ अश्वघोषस्य चतरि-
शेसवछरे हेमतपखे प्रथमेदिवसे दसमे

Tr:—Rajā Aswaghosa's 40th year, dewy Season, 10th Day

Dr Vogel was the first man to bring out the text and translation of this inscription (7). Then Dr. Venis deciphered some of the letters that had not been deciphered before and discussed it in a scholarly manner (8). Dr. Vogel has shewn that there is want of अनुस्वार in it and that र of राज्ञा and आ of चतारि have been effaced. Now the question arises as to the identity of

7. Epi. Ind. VIII p 171

8. J.R.A.S. 1912, pp 701—707.

Aśvaghosh. As the author of Buddhacharita had not the title of Rājā, we were right in holding in the second chapter of this book that Ashvaghosh of this inscription was the name of a S'aka king and that at one time he ruled over Benares. This inscription is written in the Kushan script. Its language is a kind of Prākrita. According to Dr. Vogel the date given in this inscription is of the era of Kaniṣka. But we are disposed to hold that this Aśvaghosh lived before the time of Kaniṣka as the letters in this inscription resemble those of the Muttra inscription of the Śaka Satraps. Another inscription of Aśvaghosh has been found at Sarnath. It is written in the same character and in it he has been described as a king. This inscription runs as follows:—

(1) राज्ञो अश्वघोष (स्य)

(2) [उपख] हे [म] [तमखे]

The Inscription of the time of the King Kaniṣka.

Three inscriptions of the Kushan age may be seen at the pedestal, back and on the umbrella-post of the huge figure of the Bodhisattva statue made of red stone and now kept in the museum of Sarnath. The date of

these inscriptions was the third year of the reign of the King Kaniska. Dr. Vogel has deciphered all of them and has dealt with them rather elaborately(9). The first of these three inscriptions has been discussed historically in the second chapter of this book. In the year 1862 Gen. Cunningham discovered an image similar to the above one in the site of the ancient city of Srāvasti (10). Its pedestal bears an inscription of three lines which has been discussed in several journals by the late Rajendralal Mi:ra, Prof. Dowson, and Dr Bloch(11). Some illegible portions of this inscription have been rendered clear after the publication of the Sarnath inscription. The text of the inscription discovered at Sarnath is given below ;—

१, महारजस्य कणिष्कस्यं सं ३ हे ३ दि २२

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9. Vogel, Ep. ind. VII pp 173-181.

10. A. S. R. I. p. 339 V. p. VII and XI p. 86, Dr. Anderson's Catalogue of Calcutta museum Vol I, p. 194.

11. Dr. R. L. Mitra J. A. S. B. Vol XXXIX part I. 13 Prof. Dowson, J. R. A. S. New series Vol. V. p. 192 Dr. T. Bloch in J. A. S. B. 189 p. 274. Mr. R. D. Banerjee's article Sahitya Parisad Patrika 1312 B. S. pp. 170-172.

२. एतये पूर्वये भिक्षुस्य पुष्यबुद्धिस्य सद्धेवि
३. हारिस्य भिक्षुस्य बलस्य त्रेपिटकस्य
४. बाधिसत्त्वो छत्रयष्ठि च प्रतिष्ठापितो
५. वाराणसिये भगवतो चंकमे सहा मात
६. पितिहि सहा उपाध्यायाचेरेहि सद्धे विहारि
७. हि अन्तेवासिकेहि च सहा बुद्धमित्रये त्रेपिटक
८. ये सहाक्षत्रपेन वनष्परेण खरपल्ला
९. नेन च सहाच च (तु) हि परिषाहि सर्वसत्वनम
१०, हित सुखाय

The Srāvasti inscription makes mention of Puṣpa-buddhi and Bhikshu Bala. It has no reference to the two Kshatrapa. The sum and substance of this inscription is the consecration by Bhikshu Bala of the image of the Bodhisattva together with the umbrella and the rod thereof. The two other inscriptions of Sarnath are to the same effect. Only the text of the inscriptions is given below.

A. (१) भिक्षुस्य बलस्य त्रेपिटकस्य बाधिसत्त्वोप्रतिष्ठापितो
(२) महाक्षत्रपेन खरपल्लानेन सहाक्षत्रपेनवनष्परेन्

B. (१) महाराजस्य कनि (ष्कस्य) स ३ हे, ३ दि २ (२)
(२) एतये पूर्वये भिक्षुस्य बलस्य त्रेपिट-(कस्य)
(३) बोधिसत्वो छत्रयष्टि च [प्रतिष्ठापितो]

Remarks :—This inscription is the oldest one associated with the name of the King Kaniṣka Several facts of historical interest centre round the two names of Kharapallāna and Banaspara given in this inscription. According to the contents of the inscription on the umbrella-rod, both the persons had rendered help in the matter of the grant and Banspara had the title of Kshatrapa. In the inscription on the image Khara pallāna has been described as the Mahākshatrapa. Dr. Vogel holds that these two persons bore the cost and the actual gift was made by the Bhikshu and that hence there is nothing improper to call it the gift of Bala. Though there is difference of opinion about the fact whether the two images of Srāvasti and Sarnath were made by the same sculptor, yet there is no doubt that Bhikshu Bala was the donor of both of them. Most probably, the two Kshatrapas mentioned above were Buddhists and were governors under the King Kaniṣka. Their connection with the Śaka empire established in the 1st century of the Christian era may be historically established. Perhaps it may not be wrong to suppose that the Mahakshatrapa Banaspara had been placed in charge of the government of the eastern portion of the empire of Kaniṣka.

Another inscription of the Kushan age incised on a stone umbrella deserves special mention. The text of this inscription is given below.

(१) चत्तार-इमानि भिखवे अ (रि) रय-सच्चानि
(२) कतमानि [च] त्तारि दुखख [:] दि [भि] ख्खवे अरा [रि] य सच्चं
(३) दुख्ख समुदयो अरियय [स] च्चं दुख्खनिरोधो अरिय-सच्चं
४. दुख्ख निरोधगामिनी [च] पटिपदा-अरि [य] सच्चं (12)

It is evident that this inscription records the substance of the sermon which according to tradition the Buddha is said to have preached at Benares (13). It is but meet that such an inscription should be found at Sarnath, because its subject matter is closely associated with this place. There is another point in it which deserves special attention. It is written in Pali. This language was at one time the medium through which the Buddhists of the Hinayana school preached their religion. Again, we see that no inscription

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12. Sarnath Catalogu No D (c) 11.

13. The whole sermon has been given in the 1st Chapter It has been taken from the Mahāvagga.

of any subsequent date in the Pali language has as yet been discovered in Northern India. Hence it appears that Pali continued to be the medium of religious preaching in Benares down to the Kushan period. This inscription is one of the 25 inscriptions dug out during the excavation work of 1906-7. Most of these inscriptions repeat the formula beginning with "ये धम्मं हेतुप्रभवा," (14)

GUPTA INSCRIPTIONS.

It has been said before that though the Gupta kings were themselves Hindus yet they were invariably favourably disposed towards the Buddhists. So during their time the Buddhists of various sects rose to influence at Sarnath, the centre of Buddhism. An account of these sects may be gathered from rock-inscriptions and other sources. Two such inscriptions of two distinct sects have been discovered at Sarnath. One of them may be seen on the famous Asoka pillar and the other on the railing in the southern chamber of the Main shrine (15).

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14. Vide annual Report of Archæological Survey for 1906-7 plate XXX.

15. Annual Report 1904-5 p 68; third 1907-8 p 73.

The first of them runs thus:—

आ [चा] र्यनम् स [म्मि] तियानां परिग्रह वात्सी पुत्रिकानां

The second of them is given below :—

(A) आचार्यनं सर्वास्ति वा

(B) दिनं परिग्रहे

From an examination of न and other letters in these two inscriptions it appears that they belong to the Gupta period. Dr. Vogel says that the date of the 1st inscription was the 4th century of the Christian Era-(16). This view seems to be correct because Fahien's accounts bear testimony to the influence of this sect Most probably, the Sammitiyas grew powerful at Sarnath from the middle of the 4th century. They belonged to the Vātsiputrika sect of the Buddhists. This may also be known from the Tibetan accounts. The second inscription indicates the influence of the Sarvāstivādins. Its first portion seems to be of a later date. An earlier inscription has been effaced and new words in Sanskrit have been incised in its place. Most probably, the Sarvāstivadās substituted in their own name for an earlier sect in order to glorify themselves

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16. Epi. Ind. VIII no 17 p 192.

Nothing about the earlier has sect as yet been known The Sarvāstivādins, like the Sammitiyas, formed a branch of the Sthaviravādins and belonged to the Hinayāna School. It has been known from various sources that they rose in power at Sarnath from the 1st century (17) Hence the Sammitiyas must have acquired influence there after their decline. Again, we learn from the accounts of It-sing that the Sarvāstivādins grew powerful towards the middle of the 7th century.

Another noteworthy inscription of this age about the grant of a lamp post was discovered during the excavation of the year 1904-6. It was incised on a light post. From the shape of the letters its date seems to be the 4th or the 5th century.

Text

१. देयधर्म्मोयं परमोपा

२. [स]क-कीर्त्तिः [मूल-ग] न्धकु

३. [ट्यां] [प्र] दी [प · दद्धः]

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17. Epi, in:, VI No p 172. One of the inscriptions discovered near 'Jagat Singh's stupa' during the excavation work in 1907-8 makes mention of the Sarvāstivādins. Its date was the 2nd Century of the Christian Era. A. S. R. 1907-8 p XXI.

Many such light posts were discovered at Sarnath. Most of the letters of this inscription have been effaced. Dr. Vogel has filled up a gap by putting the word गन्धकुट्यां there. The inscriptions on the earthen seals discovered at Sarnath suggested to him this mode of filling up of the gap. Such seals generally bear impressions of the wheel, the deer and the following inscription. In the Sarnath catalogue its No is F. (d)5.

(१). श्री सद्धर्म्म चक्रे मू

(२). ल—गन्धकुट्यां भग

(३). वतः

The alphabetical symbols used in this inscription seem to belong to the 6th or the 7th century. It is clear from this that at one time Sarnath was called "Saddharma Chakra Vihāra'. This name continued down to the time of Govinda Chandra as it is clear from his inscription. There is not the least doubt about the fact that this name is commemorative of the setting of the Wheel of Law in motion. Antiquarians do not agree among themselves about the site of the "Mūlagandhakuti." We are disposed to give this name to the chamber with the image of the Buddha in it, a description of which has been left by Hiuen Tsang

(18). For the details of this matter the reader is referred to the appendix (B). By 'Gandhakuṭi' is meant nothing but a chamber full of fragrance. The chamber occupied by the Buddha was always filled with the fragrance of incence and sweet smelling flowers. This seems to be the reason why it got the name of Gandhakuti. From the adjunct 'mula' (original) it appears that there were other *Gandhakutis* there.

Besides these, many inscriptions of the Gupta period incised on pedestals may be seen here. The inscription of Kumāragupta has been alluded to before. The grant of the Bhikshu Harigupta and the broken inscription of the Gupta king Prakaṭāditya may be seen in Dr. Fleet's' "Gupta Inscriptions.' We consider it unnecessary to reproduce them here.

INSCRIPTIONS IN PROTO-BENGALI SCRIPT:—

After the Gupta period some Pāla kings exercised sway over Sarnath. This fact is borne out by two of their inscriptions discovered at Sarnath.

The first of them in point of time runs as follows:— Sarnath Catalogue No D (F) 59.

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18. **The Main Shrine was built on the ruins of the "Mula Gandhakuti" during the Pala period.**

Text.–विश्वपालः॥ दशचैत्यांस्तु यत्र पुण्यं कारयित्वार्जितं तत्
मया सर्वलोको भवं [त्तेन] सर्वज्ञः कारूण्यमयः ॥ श्री
जयपाल ....एतानुद्दिश्य कारितमामृत पाले [न]।

The word Visvapāla has no connection with what follows. A word after 'Jayapāla' has been scraped off. This Jayapāla seems to be the father of the famous king Vigrahapāla I. Jayapāla's father Vākpala was the youngest brother of the king Dharmapāla. His date was 86 A.D. The letters of the inscription seem to be of the 9th century. The second inscription is given below:—Sarnath catalogue No B (c).

Text.

१. ओँ नमो बुद्धाय ॥
वाराण (ण) शी (सी)-सरस्यां गुरव-श्रीवामराशिपादाब्जं
आराध्य नमित भूपति शिरोरूहैः शैवलाधीशं
इ (ई) शान चित्रघ टादि कीर्तिरत्नशतानि यौ।
गौड़ाधिपो महीपाल काश्यां श्रीमानकार [यत्] ॥

२. सफलीकृत- पाण्डित्यौ बोधाव-विनिवर्त्तिनौ।
तौ धर्म्मराजिकां साङ्गं धर्म्मचक्रं पुनर्नवं ॥
कृतवन्तौ च नवीनामष्टमहास्थान-शैलगन्धकूटीं
एतां श्रीस्थिरपाला वसन्तपालोऽनुजः श्रीमान् ॥

३. संवत् १०८३ पौष दिने ११

४. ये धर्म्मा हेतु प्रभवा हेतुं तेषां तथागतोऽह्यवदत्

५. तेषांञ्च यो निरोध एवं वादी महाश्रमणः ॥ (19)

After Mahīpāla's time comes chronologically the inscription of the Chedi king Karṇadeva which may be seen in the museum at Sarnath. It bears No D (1) 8. It is now in pieces. Mr. Hultzsch has given a text of it by putting together the broken parts. This transcript is of very little value; hence only the subject matter of it is given here. The script of the inscription is old Nāgari and the language ungrammetical Sanskrit. This inscription was issued by Karnadeva, a scion of the Chedi Dynasty of Tripuri in 810 Kalachuri Samvat i. e. 1058 A.D. At that time some Stha-

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19. This inscription has been published five times. It has also been discussed in various magazines. Last of all Mr. A. K. Maitreya edited it with its Bengali Translation, (Gaṇḍa Lekhamālā p, 104-109) for the details of it the reader is referred to the Appendix and the following articles. Asiatic Researches vol V. p, 131. and vol X (1808) pp. 129-133. A. S. R. vol III. p. 114 Sq, of vol XI. p. 182. Hultzsch 23 ch. Ind. Ant vol XIV. p. 139 Sq. A. S. R. 1903-4 p. 221. J. A. S. B. (New Series) vol II. No. 9, p. 447. I. A. XIV, 139 J. A. S. B. VXI 77 ; Bendall Cat. Buddh. Skt. Mss. Int. ii. p. 100.

viras in the monastery of *Saddharmachakravihāra* were made to pronounce benedictions. We learn from the inscription that Māmakā, the wife of Dhaneśvara, a follower of the Māhayana school, got prepared a copy of Aṣṭāsāhasrikā (Prajñāpāramita) and made a gift of a certain article to the Bhikshus.

KUMARADEVI'S INSCRIPTION.

This large inscription of 26 slokas was discovered by Dr. Marshall near the Dhameka stupa in 1908. The text of it has been published and nicely commented upon (20). So, in order to preclude lengthiness, we shall confine ourselves to a mere discussion of it. Its language is elegant. Its script is old Nāgari. It describes the construction of a *Vihāra* at Sarnath by the queen of the king Govinda Chandra of Kananj. On comparing it with the other inscriptions of Govinda Chandra, its date seems to be the early part or the 12th century. After recording salutation to Vasudhārā and Chandra it gives a genealogy of the line of Kumaradevi and Govinda Chandra. Govinda Chandra has been described as an incarnation of the god Vishnu for the protection of Benares from the inroads of the Mahomedans. Kumaradevi

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20. Ep. Ind. Vol IX pp 319 JJ. Catalogue No D. (1) 9.

and Sankaradevi have been described as the daughters of Devarakshita. Shankaradevi's father's name was Mahana or Mathana and he was the meternal uncle of the Gouda king Ramapāla. Hence we see that Kumaradevi was the daughter's daughter of Mathanadeva. It is said in the 21st sloka of the inscription that Kumaradevi built a Vihara at Dharma Chakra or Sarnath. In the 22nd and the 2 nd sloka it is stated that she made a gift of a copper plate inscribed with the teachings of Si-dharmachakrajina to Jambuki, the foremost of the Pattalikas. She also made certain rapairs to the image of Sreedharmachakrajira of Dharmāsoka's time. The inscription again speaks of the construction of the Vihāra. In short, this inscription deals with the following topics:—

(*a*) Genealogy of the lines of Kumaradevi and Govind Chandra.

(*b*) The existence at Sarnath of an ancient image of the Buddha known as Dharmachakrajina.

(*c*) Dharmachakrajina *Vihāra* was the name of the shrine where this image was kept. It might have been a Gandhakuti.

(*d*) The Copper plate alluded to in it was inscribed with the doctrine that the Buddha preached at

Benares. This interesting copper plate however has not as yet been discovered.

The Moghul Badshah Humāyun paid a visit to Sarnath. His son Akbar incised a stone inscription here in the year 1858 in order to make this occasion memorable. It is written in Persian. Its English translation is given below.

Tr:—The late Humayun, the king of seven kingdoms, one day sat here and thereby increased the sun's lustre. His son and servant Akbar then projected to build a lofty edifice here. Thus this fine building was made a Hijiri 996.

This stucture stands on the Chaukhandi stupa. The above inscription was discovered inside it.

CHAPTER VII.

The Present Ruins of Sarnath.

In this chapter we propose to give a rough sketch of the principal relics to be met with at Sarnath for the guidance of the visitors to this place.

A visitor to Sarnath may go there from Benares either by rail (B. N. W. Ry.) the place being only half a mile from the Railwaya station of that name or by Ekka, carriage or any such conveyance. It is far more advantageous to travel by the latter class of conveyance. When journeying in a *ghari* the visitor will, when he has advanced a little towards the east, crossing the bridge of the river Barunā, see a thin line of mango groves. The sight of these trees reminds one of the ancient 'Migadāva'. Then advancing a little he will have to make a tour towards the north. A few minutes' journey in this direction will bring him to the Chaukhāndi Stupa standing on the left side of the road.

CHAUKHANDI STUPA.

The lower protion of this stupa seems nothing more than a mere heap of earth. An octagonal structure made of brick stands on the top of it. We cannot

understand how it got the name of "Chaukandi". It is octagonal in shape and its date seems to be comparatively modern. It was built in 1588 by the emperor Akbar with the object of commemorating the visit of his father Humayun to this place. There is a Persian inscription on it to this effect. This matter has been dealt with in chapter VI. The lower portion of it which is made of earth belongs to a very ancient date of the Buddhistic period. In 1835 Mr. Cunningham sank a well below the octagonal structure but found nothing of importance there. He therefore came to the conclusion that it was merely one of the stupas described by Hiuen Tsang. Sir John Marshall also is of opinion that it was near this place that the Buddha met his five disciples In 1905 Mr. Oertel carried on excavation work in the ground lying to the north of this stupa and discovered a host of ancient relics. On the outside of the boundary wall of the stupa there is a number of niches for keeping images. Mr. Oertel holds that the stupa was 200 feet in height. But its present height with the inclusion of the brick-built steeple is only 82 feet. The top of the steeple commands a wide view of the surrounding landscape. From there one may clearly see the 'Dhāmeka Stupa' in the North and the

'Dhawjā of Benimādhava' (the Aurenzeb minar) in the South.

EXCAVATED AREA AT SARNATH.

After a few minutes' journey from this place the visitor will find himself in the vast ruins of Sarnath. The Archeological museum of Sarnath stands on the right hand side of the road. Instead of going there direct the visitor will do well to follow the path directed by the Archæological Department. He should go along the path by the side of the sign-board bearing the words "starting point". Shortly he will come to an excavated place of circular form. The antiquarians have given this place the name of "Jagat Singh's Stupa". (1) In this place there once stood a very large brick stupa In the year 1794, the Dewan Jagat Singh demolished this stupa for the purpose of collecting bricks and brought them to Benares. A very nice marble vessel was dug out of this place. The lid of this vessel has been kept in the museum of Calcutta. In the year 1918, Sir John Marshall carried on excavation work here

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(1) Now Mr. Sahni has altered the sign board and calls it Dharmarājikā according to my identification without any reference to it in his new guide. book See J. A. S. B., N. S., 1919, No. 5. p. 198.

and came to the conclusion that the original stupa was built during the reign of Asoka and that it was repaired seven times. There is no doubt about the fact that it was the "Dharmarājikā" built by Asoka. Its last repair work was done in the 11th century along with that of the Main Shrine. Some small monuments lie scattered on all sides of Jagat Singh's stupa. These were built by Buddhistic travellers at different times.

THE MAIN SHRINE AND THE PILLAR OF ASOKA.

Advancing a little further the visitor will see the main shrine. The inside of this hall is 64 feet square. On all sides of it there are remains of small chambers. In the southern chamber, there is a very smooth stone-railing of the time of Asoka. It was built of one entire block of stone. Most probably it once surrounded the Asoka pillar. The height of the shrine may be inferred from the thickness of its walls. It is certain that its front faced the East. On the east of it there is a stone-yard. The date of the structure seems to be the 11th century. The Archæological Department also holds this view. We think that it was rebuilt by King Mahipala of the Pala Dynasty under the name of "Sailagandhakuti." This shrine was built on the terrace of a bigger one, the description of which has been left

by Hiuen Tsang. It was on the site of this shrine that the Buddha began to preach his doctrine. The results of the excavation work lead us to infer that there was an older shrine below the Main Shrine and that the small stupa inside the Asoka railing stood inside it. These points will be rendered clearer when further excavation work is carried on. On all sides of this shrine, chambers and stupas belonging to different ages and of various sizes may be noticeable. The broken lower part of the pillar of Asoka may be seen to its west. The broken pieces of its upper part lie in the north-western corner of it. The smoothness of the pillar is worth observation. These pieces and the lion-mounted capital were discovered in the west of the Main Shrine. All these structures were ruined in consequence of the Mahomedan invasion in the 12th cantury. The lion-capital may now be seen in the museum. The inscription in the Asoka pillar has been discussed in the sixth chapter.

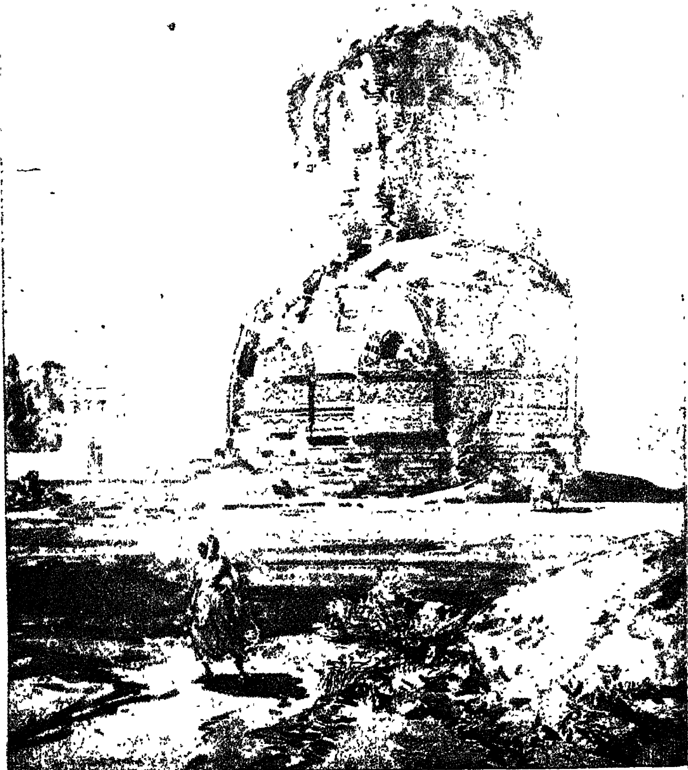
The Monastery area.

Now the visitor has to proceed towards the north-east along the winding and uneven path to the north of the Main Shrine. On either side of this path, he will notice remains of chambers, houses and stupas.

The images and pillars now kept in the museum were dug out from this place.

At a short distance he will see a sign-board bearing the words "To Monastery Area." In the ground to the north of this place the ruins of four distinct Vihāras have been discovered. In days of old, a large number of Buddhist Bhikshus and Bhikshunis lived in these Vihāras. In the first of them many chambers and even a well have been found. It is a matter of wonder that this Vihāra had a drain which may still be seen. Traces of a similar arrangement have been noticed in the ruins of Bhitā. This drain falls into the tank lying to the West. The second Vihāra stands to the west and the third Vihāra to the east of the first Vihāra. The third Vihāra stands on a comparatively low level. Still the visitor will find every access to it by following the same path. Traces of the dwellings of Bhikshus and Bhikshunis may be noticed in this place as well. There are also traces of the wooden doors of those houses. Advancing a little to the east along a higher ground the visitor will come to the fourth Vihāra. This Vihāra also stands on a lower level. Going a little further towards the south, the visitor will come to the "Dhameka Stupa."

Plate V.



Dhāmekh Stupa.

To face p. 183.

DHAMEKA STUPA.

This Stupa used to be seen long before the excavation work at Sarnath was taken up. In the opinion of Dr. Venis the word 'Dhamekh' comes from skt. धर्म्मेक्षा । (Pondering of the law). When viewed from afar it looks like a Siva-linga (Phallic symbol). Did then the Mahāyāna Buddhists build their Viharas on the model of the Siva linga ? The entire stupa is a solid body. Its height is 104 feet. The diameter at the bottom is 93 feet. The lower portion of the stupa up to a height of about 37 feet is built of blocks of stone fastened together by iron bolts. The upper part is built of brick. In the lower part there are eight big niches. Each of them once contained an image. Now only the pedestal thereof may be seen. Further down the stupa there are ornamental works of geometrical figures. These pieces of stone indicate a very fine art There are also figures of swans, frogs and men of dwarfish stature. Each of them holds a lotus in his hand. Thy figures on the western side of the stupa may fairly rival any sculptural product of modern India European scholars as well as the Indian highly esteem these artisti-works. The style of these works resembles the free-hand style of the Ceylonese sculptors. From this the

late Mr. V. A. Smith concludes that the Indian worker-here followed the Ceylonese style. But mere resemblance between two works can never truly indicate which class of workers followed the other. It simply shows that there was some connection between the two communities of workers. Judging from the style of sculpture, these seem to be the work of the 7th century. Most probably the stupa also was built in that time. In 1835 Mr. Cunningham dug a well inside and discovered an inscription of the 7th century. But he also found bricks resembling those of the 2nd and 3rd centuries at the bottom of the stupa. Hence we may not be wrong to conclude that the original stupa belonged to olden times and that it had been repaired several times.

Advancing a little towards the West the visitor will see an open house containing a large number of images lying scattered here and there. It was built when Mr. Oertel had been carrying on his excavation work at Sarnath. The images in it are exposed to the rays of the sun and rain. The most important of the images are of the Nine grahas, of Jumnā and of many other Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

SARNATH MUSEUM.

Advancing a little towards the south thevisitor will come to the museum. In the middle chamber of it, he will find the images of most ancient date and other relics.

The most conspicous of the finds is the lion-mounted capital of Asoka. On the left side of it there stands the image of Bodhisattwa made of red stone and belonging to the time of Kaniska. On the northern wall there is the statue of Mahavira having eight hands and on the eastern wall there is the image of the Buddha in the mode of setting the wheel of Law in motion. In the southern chamber may be seen the images of the Buddha, Bodhisattwa, Tārā, Mārichi and other deities all belonging to a subsequent age. Inside the Southern wing further on may be seen sculptured tablets of stone, pillar tops, small stupas and other relics. On the slabs of stone scenes, from the life of the Buddha have been represented. On the western Verandah of the Museum, the visitor will see a huge lintel of stone. In the northern chamber of the museum he will see earthen jars and other versels, bricks bearing inscriptions and household utensils used in those very early times, A detailed account of these finds has been furnished in the 7th chapter.

In closing this account, it may be remarked that the Sarnath Museum can not be fitly studied in an hour or two, such are the attractions of the antiquities to be viewed from the stand-point of art, archæology and ancient history.

APPENDIX A.

The *Mudrās* form a special subject in the Buddhist Iconography. (*Vide* A. Foucher, *Iconogaphie Bouddhique*, Paris, 1900 P. 68 V.).

Abhaya Mudrā—or of 'Blessing'. In this position the left hand remains open in the lap or holding the *Saṁghāṭi* the right is raised in front of the chest with the fingres and thumb half-extended and with the palm facing forwards. The Mudrā is particularly noticeable in the images of the Kushān Age. See B (a) figure.

Varada Mudrā—The right hand hanging down over the knee, the palm of the hand turned outwards indicating charity. It is to be noticed only in the case of standing figures.

Dhyāna Mudrā—In this posture, both the hands are laid upon one another in the lap. Only in the seated figures, this can be seen.

Bhūmisparśa Mudrā—This attitude has special significance in the Buddhist mythology. When the Buddha was attacked by Māra, he called up the Earth Goddess to bear witness to his previous births. In this

posture, the Buddha's hand touches the Earth, Vasumati, the Goddess, rises up at the same time. Soon after the Māra is vanquished, the Buddha attains the Enlightenment. Thus, the *Mudrā* stands as a symbol of the *Saṁbodhi.* We find, the image in Buddha Gayā is represented in the same posture. Cf. Sarnath B (6) 175, B (c) S. Another name for the Mudrā is *Vajrāsana.* The *Śāktānanda taraṅgini* prescribes the following rule for it :—

उर्वोः पादौ क्रमान्न्यस्येत् कृत्वा प्रत्यङ्मुखाङ्गुली ।
करौ निदध्यादाख्यातं वज्रासनमनुत्तमम् ॥

Dharmcakkra Mudrā—Or 'Teaching' attitude. Both the hands of the figure rest on the chest. The index and the thumb figures of the right hand being united are touched by the middle finger of the left hand. In such *Mudrā*, the figure is always to be found seated. This posture primarily symbolises the first preach of Buddhism at *Sārnāth*. *See* fig. B (6) 181. At Srāvasti, too, when the Buddha showed the miracles, he assumed the same posture.

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APPENDIX B.

Identification of Three Monuments at Sarnath.

Great diversity of opinion prevails among antiquarians with regard to three monuments discovered at Sarnath, *viz.* (1) The Asoka Pillar, (2) Jagat Sing stupa, and (3) the "Main Shrine." About these three we possess two ancient accounts of different ages. One is Hiuen-t-siang's descriptions of Sārnāth, another is the account in Mahipala's Inscription. In Hiuen-t-siang's travels these monuments are mentioned as intact, whereas the Mahipala inscription makes mention only of repairs. No endeavour has hitherto been made to establish a correspondence between Hiuen-t-siang's account and that of the Mahipala's inscription and between these two and the topography of the newly discovered monuments.

Let us now examine the Chinese pilgrim's account in so far as it concerns our discussion. He writes :—To the northeast of the river Varunā about 10 li or so, we come to the Saṅghārāma of *Lu-ye.* Its precincts are divided into *eight portions* (sections) connected by a surrounding wall. In the great enclosure is a *Vihāra*

about 200 ft. high; above the roof is a golden-covered figure of the Āmra fruit. The foundations of the building are of stone, and the stairs also, but the towers and niches are of brick. In the middle of the *Vihāra* is a figure of Buddha made of (native copper); he is represented as turning the wheel of the law. To the south-west of the Vihara is a stone stupa built by Asoka-raja. Although the foundations have given way, there are still 100 ft. or more of the wall remaining. In front of the building is a stone pillar about 700 ft. high. The stone is altogether as bright as jade. It is glistening, and sparkles like light.[1]

Next let us examine how far the present remains can be identified with the monuments mentioned in the above extract; we propose the following identifications :—

A. "A Vihara 200 ft. high" = the Main Shrine and its original foundations.

B. "A stone stupa" = the Jagat Singh Stūpa (according to Sir John Marshall).

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1 Beal's Buddhist Record of the Western World (Popular Edition), Bk. VII, pp. 45-46. Also, Watter's "On Yuan Chwang's Travels." Vol. II, p. 50. Beal's Life of Hiuen-tsiang, p. 99. The height of the *Vihār*, as given here, is 100 ft. instead of 200 ft. as in other versions.

C. " A stone pillar" = the Asoka Pillar.

Assuming these identifications to be correct, the actual progress of the pilgrims round the sacred precincts might have been somewhat as follows :—Entering the site where the "Main Shrine" now stands and where stood the old shrine facing the east and containing an image of the "Divine One," the pilgrim would retire keeping the shrine on his right hand *Pradakṣiṇena* and moving to the south ; he would, then come to the "Jagat Singh Stupa" and moving round, keeping it also to the right, he would finally look on the Asoka Pillar to the true north and to the west of the "Main Shrine."

Anybody examining the present main shrine carefully will come to the conclusion that its erection is of more recent date than the original. That the original site was a much larger one can be inferred from the pavement extending towards the east, which was undoubtedly the direction of its main gate.[2]

Sir John Marshall, upon close examination of the structure, has ascribed the Jagat Singh Stupa to the

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2 Hiuen-t-siang speaks of *Saṅghārāms* generally as having the "doors open towards the east." Beal's Record of the Western World (Popular Edition), p. 74.

Asokan period.[3] This, therefore, was the stupa which the Chinese pilgrim noticed to the south-west of the main building.

The description left by Hiuen-t-siang of the pillar of "dazzling brightness" exactly fits in with the Asoka pillar now standing to the west of the Main Shrine. Sir John Marshall has questioned this identity, but nearly all his objections have been met by Dr. Vogel. We have, besides, V. A. Smith's remark in his "Asoka" which points to the same identity, "only two of the ten inscribed pillars known, namely, those at Rummindei and Sarnath, can be identified certainly with the monuments noticed by Hiuen-t-siang.[4]"

Turning to the Mahipala inscriptions, we note that many years after Hiuen-t-siang's visit to Sarnath, in 1026 A. D., an inscription was issued in Mahipal's reign to the effect that some repairs had been made to the ruins of Sārnāth.[5] Much light is thrown on the monu-

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3 "Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath" by Pt. D. R. Sahni, p. 9.

4 Asoka (Second Edition), p. 124.

5 Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIV, p. 139f : J. A. S. B. (N. S.), Vol. II, 1906, pp. 445-7, Epi. Ind., Vol. IX (1907-8), pp. 291-93.

ments under review by certain passages in this inscription.

The couplet we quote below is the most important part of the record :—

(*a*) "*Tau Dharmarājikāṃ Sāṁgaṃ Dharmacakra Punarṇavaṃ*"

(*b*) "*Kṛtavantau ca navīnāmaṣṭa Mahāsthāna Śaila Gandha Kutīṃ*"

Translation :—"they (Sthirapālā and Vasantapālā) repaired the Dharmarājikā and the Dharmacakra (vihara?) including the accessories, as, well as the Gandhakuṭī, made of stone, beloging to eight great places."

We shall attempt, now, to examine these monuments and establish their identity, as for as we can, in the light of Hiuen-t-siang Travels, epigraphic finds and other documents.

DHARMARĀJIKĀ.—Dr. Vogel tried to identify the present "Dhāmekh Stupa" with the "Dharmarājikā' of the inscription. But since the publication of Dr. Venis' view that the word *Dhāmekh*' was derived from *Dharmekṣā* rather than from *Dharmarājikā*, Dr. Vogel abandoned his identification. Archæologists, have

however, ascertained that the *Dhāmekh* Stupa belongs to the Gupta period, and not to the Asokān period. The word *Dharmarājikā* again, was used to denote Asokān stupas generally.(6) It has already been pointed out that the Jagat Sing Stupa was of Asokān age. We may infer, therefore that the word "*Dharmarājikā* refers to the original structure of the Jagat Singh's Stupa. Moreover, we gather from the travels of Fahien that he saw a stupa where the *Pancavaggiyas* paid reverence to the Buddha, and to the north of it was the famous site of the "Turning the wheel of the law."(7) Judging from this, I am inclined to believe that the *Dharmarājikā* is the Jagat Singh stupa.

DHARMACAKRA.—It has been mentioned in the Mahīpāl lipi, as *Sāngaṃ Dharmacakraṃ* Dr. Vogel took the word *sāṅgaṃ* to mean 'complete' and the late Dr. Venis seems to have accepted his interpretation. This rendering, in my opinion, is very doubtful. We meet with an expression like *Sāṅga Veda* meaning *Ṣaḍaṅga-*

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6 84,000 *Dharmarājikās* built by Asoka Dharmaraja, as stated by *Divyāvadāna* (Ed. Cowell and Neil, p. 379), quoted Foucher Ico. Bouddhiqre, p. 554.

7 The Pilgrimage of Fahien (translated by Laidlay), pp. 307-8.

Veda Likewise, we may take the expression *sāṅgaṃ Dharmacakraṃ* to mean the present *Dharmacakra* together with its various accessories. The meaning of Dharmacakra remains to be settled. From the fact that the Buddha at Sarnath turned 'the wheel of the Law' have originated in later times, the Dharmacakra symbol or the symbol of the wheel, the *Dharmacakra-mudrā* and even the name *Dharmacakravihār* denoting the monastery of Sarnath (8) ; in a seal discovered in the course of excavation at Sarnath has been inscribed :—श्रीसद्धर्मचक्रे श्रीमूलगन्धकुट्यां भगवतो.(9) From this we may conclude that the whole monastery used to be called *Saddharmacakra* and a chapel within its precincts was known as *Mūlagandha Kuṭi* (Main shrine). From this we may deduce that the present monastery, as a whole, together with its accesories has been meant by the expression *Sāṅgam Dharmacakram.* Again, Mr. A. K. Maitra, the founder of the Vārendra Research Society, is of opinion that the Dharmacakra Symbol, which formerly surmounted the lion capital of Asoka, and of which fragments are now preserved in the

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8 In the inscription of Kumāradevī, we find that Sarnath has been called *Saddharama-cakravihār* ;

9 Hargreve's Annual Progress Report for 1915 p. 4

Sarnath Museum, (10) is the exact object which is denoted by the foregoing expression in the Mahipal Inscription. The practice of adorning the lion capital of Asoka with the Dharma cakkra symbol was not an uncommon feature in ancient days and we find the same thing on the Asoka pillar at Sāñchi. Therefore nothing can be said with certainty as to which object was exactly repaired—the whole monastery or the Asoka Pillar. It is not unlikely that the whole monastery was under repairs along with the repairs of the Dharmarājikā inasmuch as the monastery, the Gandha-Kūti and the Dharmarājikā were all in a ruinous condition. The Pala brothers, it may be supposed, undertook to repair all of them. It is also noteworthy in this connexion that no trace of repair can now be noticed on the surface of the Asoka Pillar.

AṢṬAMAHĀSTHĀNA-ŚAILA-GANDHAKUṬĪ--Dr. Hultsz, Dr. Vogel and Dr. Venis have offered various interpretations of this expression. Of these, Dr. Venis' is the latest. After having shown the impossibility of expounding the compound as the *Gandha Kuṭī* erected of stone, brought from eight great places, on the ground

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10 Sir John Marshall's Annual Report A. S., 1904-5 p. 36.

of Sanskrit grammar, he suggested the following interpretation : "Shrine is made of stone and in the shrine are or to it belong eight great places (positions)." (11) According to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, this compound can be no other than the मध्यमपद-लोपि समास. Then, of course, the component parts would be :— अष्टमहास्थानस्था (or स्थिता) शैलगन्धकुटी. (12) We shall consider now if this interpretation suits the topography of Sarnath and holds good on other grounds. (13) It appears to me that the word "*Saila Gandhakuṭī*" here doubtless refers to the Main Shrine of to-day, for architectural characteristics of the 12th century A. D. are traceable in the ruins and the style of this building. The word Gandhakuti has been discussed elsewhere. (14)

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11 J. A. S. B. (N. *S*. vol II, No. 9, p. 447.

12 Cf. प्रियतममध्यंहस Dasakumāra Carita.

13 Mr. Hargreaves, the Superintendent, Archæological Survey, in a letter to me expressed the view—"Its explanation, I am afraid, must always remain doubtful. "

14 Buddhist literature informs us that the room where the Buddha dwelt was usually made fragrant by burning incense and thus it received the name of Gandha Kuti. The word, in course of time, has been modified into Gandholā and came to be used in a similar sense in Tibetan books—"Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang' by S. C. Das, p. 77.

Again the previously mentioned earthen Seal, bearing the legend श्रीसद्धर्मचक्रे मूलगन्धकुट्यां भगवतो, furnishes us with the information that "in the Mūla Gandhakuti which was situated in the Saddharmacakra Vihāra." etc. The age of this epigraph is much anterior to that of the Mahipal inscription. Round the chapel in which the Buddha dwelt an extensive monastery may have gradually come into being. That chapel used to be called "Gandhakuti" and the whole monastery passed by many different names. Our attention may be turned again to Hiuen-t-siang's account for the sake of comparison. We find there that he also saw the whole monastery and a high building made of stone.(1) There was an image of Buddha therein, represented in the *Dharma cakramudrā*. In the traveller's account, one thing appears to be specially striking, and on this he seems to lay much stress : "The *Saṅghārāma* was divided into eight portions (Sections)." (15) I conjecture from this that these eight parts of the *Saṅghārāma* developed in course of time into eight places or monasteries which constituted the whole establishment. And very probably

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15 Cf. Watter's version—"This establishment, he says, was in *eight divisions* all enclosed within one wall"—Watters, Vol. II, p. 50.

this *Sanghārāma* having distinct divisions received the true designation of *Aṣṭa mahāsthāna.* It may be noted that six distinct monasteries have already been exhumed by modern exploration. I have also been informed by a Superintendent of the Indian Archæological Department that probable sites of more vihāras still lie hidden on the east of the सङ्घाराम. No excavation has been carried on in that direction (16). We may, nevertheless, arrive at these conclusions, that *Aṣṭamahāsthān* was the name given to the whole Sanghārāma and *Saila gandha-kuṭi* was the name which signified an old stone building situated probably in the middle of the *Sanghārāma* and therefore called at one time Mūla, meaning " central " or " original," from the fact that the Buddha set up his first residence there, and at another time *S'aila*, as it was chiefly built of stone.

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16. Since the publication of this paper in J. A. S. B. No. 5, 1919, a new m·nestry has come out by the recent excavation of the Archaeolgical Depot.

By the same Author.

I. INDIAN IMAGES Vol. I.

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